Being Different

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Being Different

More Neoplatonism after Derrida

By

Stephen Gersh

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PREFACE

This book is about Being because it deals with the Neoplatonists who write about "being" (*to on*). It is about Difference because it deals with Derrida who writes about "difference" (*différence*). It is about Being and Difference because it deals with the Neoplatonists and also with Derrida.

Being Different. More Neoplatonism after Derrida is the title of the second part of a project begun around 2000 of which the first part was entitled *Neoplatonism after Derrida. Parallelograms* and was published in 2006.[1] The reasons for embarking on such a project were explained in the preface to the earlier volume and, apart from mentioning that a certain crisis in traditional metaphysics and the response of various modern readers of Neoplatonism to that crisis had given the broader project its initial impetus, we will not restate those arguments in detail at this point. However, it may be useful to clarify the nature of the project a little further in the light of misunderstandings that seem to have occurred in the minds of certain readers of the earlier book.

Above all, it is necessary to grasp the significance of the phrase "Neoplatonism after Derrida" that was the title of the first volume and is the subtitle of the second. The project was not labelled "Derrida after Neoplatonism" because it was not primarily concerned with Derrida's response to Neoplatonism or the influence of Neoplatonism upon Derrida: topics admittedly of some interest because Derrida is one of the few modern thinkers who have made the effort to comprehend this tradition historically and creatively. The project was labelled "Neoplatonism after Derrida" in order to underline the fact that, in considering the relation between Neoplatonic thought and Derrida's writing, the possibility of Neoplatonism's *future* enrichment by an encounter with deconstruction is the paramount issue. Despite its commitment to whatever is metaphysically prior, stable, and timeless, the thinking to which the label "Neo-platonism" has been attached during the

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[1] Stephen Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida. Parallelograms* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). For an analysis of this volume see the valuable study of D. Gregory MacIsaac, "Platonic Deconstruction. A Review Essay of Stephen Gersh's *Neoplatonism after Derrida. Parallelograms*," in *Dionysius* 27 (2009), pp. 199–225.

last one hundred and fifty years has always been an evolving tradition.[2] When Plotinus turned towards the philosophy of Plato he penetrated to its depths but also changed it radically. Augustine took the transformed legacy of Plato—which was by now a Platon*ism* (or really a *Neo*-Platonism)—and made it Christian. Marsilio Ficino used a synthesis of the Plotinian ad Augustinian versions to initiate a new style of thinking that became an authoritative commentary on Plato himself. Moreover, the philosophies of Plotinus, Augustine, and Ficino simply represent three of the main stages of an evolving tradition that contains many subordinate phases, many interruptions and reprises, and many deviations. There have also been related and parallel traditions of thinking that, although they are not normally described with the term "Neoplatonism" share many of that tradition's philosophical assumptions. This is particularly true with respect to Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and to European Romanticism more generally. The reappearance of Neoplatonic concepts or themes can thus be noted in obvious places such as the objective Idealism of Hegel or in both the earlier and the later philosophies of Schelling and in less obvious ones such as Schleiermacher's reading of Spinoza and Jacobi. If the thinking to which the label "Neoplatonism" has been attached during the last century and a half is indeed an evolving one of the kind just described, there is absolutely no reason to think that this will not continue to be the case. One could therefore see Derrida's *quasi*-method of deconstruction as simply the latest stimulus towards the continuance and transformation of Neoplatonism. The project of "Neoplatonism after Derrida" is designed precisely in order to facilitate Neoplatonism's possible *future* enrichment from that source—however radical the transformation of Neoplatonism may turn out to be.

As explained in the preface to *Neoplatonism after Derrida: Parallelograms*, for anyone attempting to think the relation between Neoplatonic thought and Derrida's writing, two basic strategies seem possible. A first approach to the relation between Neoplatonism and Derrida is represented by the endeavour to disclose "Neoplatonic" elements within the Derridean enterprise, the most striking example of this approach being the discovery of a "semiotic square" as a habitual concomitant of the play of *différance*. The manner in which formal necessity here seemingly intrudes into a discoursive practice based on contingency can be understood against the backdrop

[2] On this question see Stephen Gersh, "Platonism, Platonic Tradition," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd. edition, ed. Donald M. Borchert (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2006).

of Neoplatonic thought. The semiotic square had always been familiar to students of Aristotle's logic where it governs the distinction between universal substances, universal accidents, individual substances and individual accidents within the theory of categories, and that between universal affirmative, universal negative, particular affirmative, and particular negative within the theory of propositions. It later became crucial to the understanding of Neoplatonic metaphysics, since the logical aspect of the process of causation that consists of an effect's remaining in its cause, an effect's procession from its cause, and an effect's reversion is seen to imply a similar fourfold pattern when the doubling of an effect's reversion to itself and to its cause is taken into account. A fourfold structure of this type can be discerned as underlying Derrida's discussion of negative theology in terms of three "paradigms" in a text to be examined later in some detail. In the present volume, however, we will primarily consider how this Neoplatonic element within the Derridean enterprise is developed *a*. as a sub-text within the writings of the Neoplatonists themselves—Here, Damascius' interpretation of the nine propositions in the second part of Plato's *Parmenides* and its relation to the aporetic dialectic through which the Ineffable is experienced will be among the focuses of attention—; *b*. as an ironic motif in the writing of Heidegger: that is, where the *Ereignis* ("Enowning") is characterized as a fourfold mirror-play. A second approach to the relation between Neoplatonism and Derrida is constituted by the project of revealing "Derridean" elements within Neoplatonic thought, the most notable example of this approach being the discovery of a "performative utterance" as a necessary complement to the theory of Being. The manner in which contingency here seemingly intrudes into a metaphysical system based on formal necessity can be understood against the background of Derridean writing. The notion of a performative utterance in general implies some kind of intensified relation between description and enactment that has the effect of undermining the conventional distinction between language and reality, and Derrida understands this performativity as including more specifically on the one hand a linguistic item such as the first person, present tense, verbs "I promise" and "I bequeath" where description is actually identical with enactment, and on the other hand a linguistic item such as the anagrammatic general structure *trace-écart* ("trace/track-deviation") where description is merely parallel with enactment, the first type of performative often being called the "Austinian" performative in honour of the philosopher J.L. Austin who first drew attention to it. The notion of a performative utterance in general can be seen as underlying Derrida's discussion of the second of the three "paradigms" of negative theology in the text to be examined in

detail later on. However, in the present volume we will again be mainly concerned with how this Derridean notion is developed *a*. as a sub-text within the writings of the Neoplatonists themselves—here, Proclus' understanding of the theurgy enjoined by the *Chaldaean Oracles* and its relation to the gods who mediate between the One and Being will be among the focuses of attention—; *b*. the parody of this idea in Heidegger's writing: that is, where the *Ereignis* mentioned above is characterized as the mutual encounter of gods and men in approaching the sway of Being.

In the light of these remarks, it is perhaps already obvious that Heidegger intervenes prominently in our project of reading Neoplatonism after Derrida. He intervenes because Heidegger has a specific view of Neoplatonic thought according to which he locates the rise of the so-called metaphysics of presence to dominance within European thought in the era of Plato and Aristotle without conceding that the Neoplatonists' increased emphasis on transcendence and ineffability in any way challenged this metaphysical prejudice, and Derrida reads Neoplatonism through this Heideggerian lens. In the present volume, it will be argued that Heidegger's thesis regarding the metaphysics of presence is correct with respect to Neoplatonism in general although it fails to take account of certain marginal tendencies such as the aporetic experience of the Ineffable in Damascius and of the wholesale mirroring of Neoplatonic structural motifs in Heidegger's own "Being-historical thinking." These last points will emerge particularly through the application of a method of *juxtaposition*.

In fact, a major part of the present volume has been written by employing the method of juxtaposition that was explained and implemented for the first time in an explicit manner in *Neoplatonism after Derrida: Parallelograms*.[3] Put in the simplest terms, the method of juxtaposition envisages the designing of a number of independent textual segments any of which may consist of derivative materials, or newly-composed materials, or a mixture of derivative and newly composed materials. Textual segments of this kind are designed to embody, in addition to whatever is stated or argued in the conventional sense, sets of latent meanings that would remain latent if the segments were left in isolation. When these segments are juxtaposed with one another, meanings shared by the two segments may pass from the latent to the apparent state, especially when the orientation of the juxtaposed terms produces a semantic contiguity. A certain analogy between a

[3] See especially Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 24–28.

textual segment and a musical timbre emerges here, given that the relation between more overt and less overt meanings within the semantic spectrum of a textual segment and the dynamic curve represented by changes in this relation are somewhat parallel to the relation between more prominent and less prominent overtones within the timbre spectrum of a musical note and the dynamic curve represented by changes in that relation. Moreover, just as the ear ignores the relation between the individual overtones and concentrates on the resulting musical timbre similarly the mind ignores the relation between the individual meanings and concentrates on the textual segment. The method of textual juxtaposition also has a naturally close relation simultaneously to deconstruction and to Neoplatonism. It relates to deconstruction in exemplifying the play of *différance* especially through its preoccupation with the transition between meaning and non-meaning, and to Neoplatonism in reflecting the hypostasis of Intellect through its emphasis on the primacy of non-discursive over discursive thinking. Given that the Egyptian hieroglyph is a symbol of differential play for Derrida and a symbol of non-discursive thinking for Plotinus, it seems reasonable for us to employ it henceforth as a symbol of textual juxtaposition. Now writing a work by designing a number of independent textual segments any of which may consist of derivative materials, or of newly-composed materials, or of a mixture of derivative and newly composed materials has certain advantages. On the one hand it allows each individual segment to transmit the authentic voice of the philosopher whose thoughts are being quoted, paraphrased, or developed without the invasion of anachronistic or irrelevant interpretative criteria. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of segments and the concomitant passing of certain meanings from a latent to an overt state permit the emergence of the novel insights and perspectives that mark the genuinely creative engagement with texts. The preferred starting-point for the implementation of the method of juxtaposition in the present work will be Derrida's articulation of what he terms the "three paradigms of negative theology" as three textual segments of the kind described.

Some further observations should be made regarding the method of juxtaposition. First, the structure resulting from the juxtaposition(s) is not to be considered as a totality of some kind, since in such a totality the textual segments would contribute to a clearly defined whole and would be sufficient to complete that whole—in other words, such a totality would not admit the possibility of extension with further segments and would contain no gaps within the arrangement of segments. Second, the arrangement of the juxtaposed segments is to be understood as non-hierarchical and de-centered, so that in many cases a given segment can be taken equally as a commentary

on another segment and therefore as subordinate to it and also as commented upon by that segment and therefore as having the opposite relation to it. Third, the structure resulting from the juxtaposition(s) should not be considered as a constative utterance but rather as a combination of constative and performative elements in which the constative predominates in the individual textual segments—where the assertion and argumentation of traditional academic discourse is mostly found—and the performative in the collectivity of the segments—where a reading and/or writing process is enacted.[4]

Considered in terms of its textual basis, the present volume *Being Different: More Neoplatonism after Derrida* differs from the earlier *Neoplatonism after Derrida: Parallelograms* in that the earlier work concentrated primarily on a reading of the three essays "Passions," "Sauf le Nom," and "Khōra" published under separate covers by Derrida in 1993, whereas the present book is based primarily on the interpretation of a single essay: "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" published in the volume *Psychē: Inventions de l'autre* in 1987. This reversal in the obvious chronological order of treatment has its own *rationale*. Thus, the development of the present author's argument moves from an emphasis on deconstruction to an emphasis on Neoplatonism, and from relative pluralism to relative monism, being intended to mirror a distinction in Derrida's styles of writing between a more playful and a more academic engagement with the dogmas of that which he summarizes under the rubric of "negative theology."

A brief analysis of the contents of this volume, noting its structural segmentation and thematic motifs, might perhaps be presented as follows: 1. *Neoplatonic Compulsions*. This chapter begins the commentary on Derrida's "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" by concentrating on part I of that essay in which the relation between negative theology and deconstruction is approached in general terms. The commentary proceeds by juxtaposing a discussion of material from "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" with a discussion of material in Derrida's "Circumfession. Fifty-Nine Periods and Periphrases" and thereby confronting a primarily constative with a primarily performative text. Especially through the reading of Augustine, the confessional character of negative theology and the negative-theological character of confession become apparent. 2.1 *Bridging the Gap* uses Der-

[4] For a more compressed illustration of the technique of textual juxtaposition see Stephen Gersh, "The First Principles of Latin Neoplatonism: Augustine, Macrobius, Boethius," in *Vivarium* 50 (2012), pp. 113–138.

rida's "first paradigm of negative theology" in part II of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" as the starting-point for an elaborate juxtaposition of textual forays into Proclus and Heidegger, the conceptual link being Derrida's insistence that Plato's notion of the "beyond" (*epekeina*) of Being that initiates the tradition of negative theology exemplifies the preoccupation with "metaphysics of presence." This chapter focuses on the non-discursive character of Neoplatonic philosophy. In contrast with the treatment of this issue in *Neoplatonism after Derrida. Parallelograms* in connection with the hypostasis of Intellect, the present analysis emphasizes the One's transcendence of the discursive domain (indirectly) through a study of the *descending* relation between the One and the henads. The non-discursive aspect of Neoplatonic philosophy and the emergence of a performative element are also described in connection with the theurgic praxis that complements henadic theory; Chapter 2.2 *Prayer*(*s*) is a study of Derrida's attempt to read Pseudo-Dionysius in formulating a component of his "second paradigm of negative theology" in part II of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." With reference to the rhetoric of prayer in Pseudo-Dionysius' writing, Derrida has successfully highlighted the intrusion of a performative discourse into a philosophical doctrine—that of ancient Christian Neoplatonism—otherwise dominated by the metaphysics of presence. Performative discourse presents a challenge to the metaphysics of presence, and this chapter further explores the implications of this challenge with a more historical analysis of Dionysius; Chapter 2.3 *Hearing Voices* is a study of Derrida's attempt to read Meister Eckhart in formulating another component of his "second paradigm of negative theology" in part II of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." With reference to the layering of quotations in Eckhart's writing, Derrida has rightly drawn our attention to the intrusion of an autonomous hermeneutics into another philosophical doctrine—that of medieval Christian Neoplatonism—otherwise dominated by the metaphysics of presence. Autonomous hermeneutics[5] also presents a challenge to the metaphysics of presence, and this chapter pursues the further ramifications of this challenge with a more historical analysis of Eckhart; 2.4 *From the One to the Blank* uses Derrida's "third paradigm of negative theology" in part II of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," as

[5] The reference here to an "autonomous" hermeneutics is to a hermeneutic praxis that is not orientated towards the discovery of a totally objective reality (or even a totally objective "text") beyond the praxis of the hermeneutics itself. Heidegger's thinking from *Being and Time* onwards and that of his followers would exemplify "autonomous" hermeneutics.

the starting-point for an extended juxtaposition of incursions into Damascius and Heidegger, the conceptual link being Derrida's suggestion that Heidegger's exploration of the "meaning" (*Sinn*) of Being that is designed to overcome the metaphysics of presence echoes the tradition of negative theology. This chapter again focuses on the non-discursive character of Neoplatonic thought. In contrast with the treatment of this issue in chapter 2.1 of the present volume in connection with the One and the henads, the present analysis emphasizes the One's transcendence of the discursive domain (indirectly) through a study of the *ascending* relation between the One and the Ineffable. The non-discursive aspect of Neoplatonic philosophy and the emergence of a performative element are also described in connection with the aporetic praxis that reflects the experience of the Ineffable. 3. *Philosophy* [*Space*] *Literature*. This chapter combines all the methods practised in previous chapters. It extends Derrida's reading of Mallarmé—and therefore literature—as a *differential* counterpart of Plato—and therefore philosophy—with an independent treatment of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés*. It juxtaposes extensive forays into the literary text of Mallarmé and the philosophical text of Proclus, using the *quasi*-theurgic ritual described in Mallarmé's prose narrative *Igitur* as a mediating structure. Most importantly, it constitutes a performative enactment of the idea of space that here emerges from both Proclus and Mallarmé as the primary thematic element by means of the method of juxtaposition itself.

The present volume *Being Different* … complements the earlier volume … *Parallelograms* in one further respect that was unforeseen at the beginning of the entire project. Jacques Derrida was still alive and working when the first volume of "Neoplatonism after Derrida" was written, the word "after" in the title being intended to include the sense of offering an invitation to him to respond. Indeed the beginnings of a "postcard-like" correspondence between Derrida and the present author had begun. At the time of writing the second volume of "Neoplatonism after Derrida," Jacques Derrida was as much part of history as are the Neoplatonists with whom he is juxtaposed in the title,[6] and the term "after" had acquired the meaning of temporal finitude and closure. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that the dynamic and differential connotations of the adverb of time will remain—at least for the readers of this book.

[6] Jacques Derrida died on October 8, 2004.

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Chapter 1: *Neoplatonic Compulsions* has been published previously under the title "Negative Theology and Conversion: Derrida's Neoplatonic Compulsions" in the volume *Derrida and Antiquity*, edited by Miriam Leonard (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2010), pp. 101–132. Chapter 2.3: *Hearing Voices* has been published previously in French under the title "Maître Eckhart et Jacques Derrida: Entendre des voix" in the volume *Maître Eckhart*, edited by Julie Casteigt (Paris: Cerf 2012), pp. 363–392. The author would like to thank the publishers for permission to reproduce this material.

CHAPTER ONE

NEOPLATONIC COMPULSIONS

Augustine

The fact that Jacques Derrida cultivated a relationship with Neoplatonism throughout his writing career is indicated by comments made in numerous seminars and interviews. On one occasion he was questioned about his reasons for adopting St. Augustine as a philosophical interlocutor in *Circonfession*, and replied that he did not remember the reasons for his decision at the time.[1] He added that he had always maintained an interest, albeit a superficial and discontinuous one, in Augustine and that, after starting on the project, everything else followed. Now Derrida was here at the same time striking a rhetorical pose of modesty and underlining the *event*-character of his own writing, since his previous dealings with writers embodying or influenced by Neoplatonism indicate more than a superficial acquaintance with that tradition. Only a measure of genuine insight could have permitted him to inscribe its so-called "negative theology" within the syntax of *différance* in such a manner as to provoke the irritated response of a prominent modern theologian.[2] This response was made in the name of Pseudo-Dionysius. It subsequently became the primary stimulus behind Derrida's own discussion of the same question some years later within a more historically contextualized treatment of Platonic, Christian, and Heideggerian thought.

But what is the relation between Derrida and Neoplatonism in precise philosophical terms?[3] This question can perhaps be answered by

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[1] See "Confessions and 'Circumfession.' A Roundtable Discussion with Jacques Derrida," in *Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession*, edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 30 [response to Mark Vessey].

[2] Cf. Jacques Derrida, "La différance," in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), p. 6 and Jean-Luc Marion, *L'idole et la distance* (Paris: Grasset, 1977), p. 318.

[3] We must here establish some clear conceptual guidelines before proceeding any further. It has become relatively common among "postmodern theologians" in recent years to confront Derrida's actual writing or some idea of deconstruction with Neoplatonic Christian writers like Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius. Unfortunately, these confrontations are often as philosophically imprecise as they are historically disembodied, since neither the relation

establishing a relation of *analogy* and *opposition* between on the one hand, Plato's understanding of reality as a structure of principles, involving a being-transcendent and the distinction between non-temporal and temporal terms, and as an implicit monism, according primacy to the logical universal and to propositional utterance—a prime example of what is termed "onto-theology"—and on the other, Derrida's approach to discourse as a structure of the trace, involving the transition between transcendent and non-transcendent terms and a becoming-temporal, and as an explicit non-monism, questioning the primacy of the logical universal and of propositional utterance. *Neo*-Platonism performs the conceptual function of reinforcing this analogy and mediating this opposition between Plato and Derrida through its notions of dialectic and emanation. The question raised above can also be answered by comparing individual readings of Plato's doctrines by Derrida. Important among these are his readings of the *Epekeina tēs ousias* ("beyond being") of Plato's *Republic* in which a metaphysical first principle is replaced by the general structures[4] of deconstruction as a group, and of the *Khōra* ("place") of Plato's *Timaeus* in which a metaphysical first principle is converted into one general structure of deconstruction in particular. In the former case, Derrida emphasizes the onto-theological character of the first principle in the Neoplatonic manner, although in the second case he denies it. The question raised above can again be answered by considering individual readings of Neoplatonic doctrines by Derrida. Of particular importance is his reading of the Negative Theology of pseudo-Dionysius' *On Divine Names* in which a metaphysical dialectic is read in counterpoint with the various general structures of deconstruction. In this case, Derrida brings into relief the dialectical character of the Neoplatonic doctrine but leaves its emanative foundation completely out of the picture.

In order to understand the relation between dialectic and emanation that is at issue here, some further preliminary remarks are necessary. In particular, we must note the pervasive occurrence in both Neoplatonism and Derrida of a fundamental dialectical-emanative structure consisting of *1*. a *positive* term (affirmative seme *a*, negative seme *b*), *2*. a *combined*

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of Augustine or Pseudo-Dionysius to Neoplatonism nor the nature of Neoplatonism as doctrine and tradition is adequately grasped.

[4] By "general structure"—a term avoided by Derrida himself in his later work but suggested by him in some of his earlier writings and also utilized by some exponents of his thought—one means such things as "trace," "supplement," "différance," "writing," etc. These might also be called *quasi*-concepts (although not concepts in any psychological sense).

term (affirmative seme *a*, affirmative seme *b*), *3*. a *negative* term (negative seme *a*, affirmative seme *b*), and *4*. a *neutral* term (negative seme *a*, negative seme *b*)—when this structure occurs in Derrida we will call it the "trace-structure" or the "fourfold structure."[5] In Neoplatonism and Derrida alike, the structure may be considered as closed or conjunctive with respect to *form*—since it embodies a symmetrical arrangement of four affirmations and four negations—, and also as open or disjunctive with respect to *content*—since the neutral term falls outside the remaining threefold structure in certain cases.[6] In applying this structure, certain further criteria must be established—*i*. the selection of the semes, *ii*. the logical relation between the semes (contradictory, different, correlative, etc.), *iii*. the number of terms, *iv*. the order of the terms, *v*. the combination of structures, and *vi*. the logical relation between the structures (contradictory, different, correlative, etc.)—for these criteria influence the relationship between Neoplatonism and Derrida.[7] In Neoplatonism with respect to *i*. the semes include "unitary," "affirmative," and "causing," and with respect to *ii*. the semes may be contradictories like "unitary" + "multiple," differences like "affirmative" + "universal," or correlatives like "causing" + "caused." We may associate the resulting structures particularly with the concept of "Negative Theology." In Neoplatonism with respect to *iii* and *iv*, a negative term may be followed either by a combined term, or by a neutral term, or by both combined and neutral terms in a sequence. These resulting structures may be associated especially with the concept of "Conversion." In Derrida with respect to *i*. the semes include "marked," "present," and "this," and with respect to *ii*, the semes may be contradictories like "marked" + "un-marked," or differences

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[5] According to Derrida's own criteria, it might best be termed a "supplementary structure." For a detailed discussion of this topic see Stephen Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida. Parallelograms* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 42–52, 64–80. It may be suggested that threefold structures are more typical of Neoplatonism—the impact of "Trinitarian" thinking being significant in the case of Christian Neoplatonism—and one must admit that this argument is true to a limited extent. However, even within structures that are overtly threefold, the *relations* between the terms are usually governed by the fourfold logic. To take some ready examples from Augustine—God the Son is begotten but not proceeding, God the Holy Spirit not begotten but proceeding, and God the Father neither begotten nor proceeding; likewise, Body is both temporal and spatial, Soul temporal but not spatial, and God neither temporal nor spatial.

[6] This always happens when the semes are contradictories.

[7] The question regarding the extent to which the organization of these structures involves violation of the principle of non-contradiction will be reserved for the conclusion of this chapter. See pp. 27–28.

like "present" + "future," or correlatives like "this" + "that." In Derrida with respect to *v* and *vi* a first structure may be combined with a second structure contradictory to it, or a first structure may be identified with the combined term of a second structure and then contrasted with the latter's neutral term. We may identify the resulting structures with the process of 'Deconstruction' itself.[8] It should be noted that in speaking of Neoplatonism and Derrida in all these instances, we are contrasting a Neoplatonism analyzed in a typically immanent manner with three phenomena which are ultimately inseparable: namely, Derrida's description of the trace,[9] Derrida's description of Neoplatonism, and Derrida's enactment of the trace with respect to Neoplatonism.[10] The first and second phenomena are inseparable because Derrida cannot describe the trace without referring to an intertext, and the second and third phenomena are inseparable because Derrida cannot describe Neoplatonism without performing a deconstruction.[11]

The fact that Derrida's relationship with Neoplatonism is well articulated emerges clearly from a group of works published between that late 1980s and early 1990s. These are his essay "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations" published in the volume *Psychē: Inventions de l'autre* (1987),[12] the text *Circonfession: Cinquante-neuf périodes et périphrases* published in the volume

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[8] The first type of combination occurs when Derrida reverses the axiological priority of a marked seme over that of an un-marked seme in order to begin a deconstruction, the second type of combination when he says that a deconstruction evades the logic of the "both … and" and the "neither … nor."

[9] On the "trace" see n. 4.

[10] The reference to *enactment* is important, since in contrasting Neoplatonism and Derrida we are contrasting a philosophical world-view which is theoretical with a discoursive activity which is simultaneously theoretical and *practical*.

[11] A final point with respect to the contrast between Neoplatonism and Derrida concerns their respective attitudes to "God." It should be noted that, in speaking above of the selection of semes by Neoplatonism, the term 'God' was *not* included. This was because such a concept is necessary to the derivative Christian Neoplatonism but not necessary to the original non-Christian type—which generally confines itself to speaking of "the One," or "the Good," or "the First." On the other hand, when speaking of the selection of semes by Derrida in reading Neoplatonism, the term "God"—implied by the notion of onto-theology—tends to occur via the Heideggerian intertext assumed. See n. 16 below.

[12] Paris: Galilée, 1987, pp. 535–595. For English translation by Ken Frieden see *Derrida and Negative Theology*, edited by Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, with a Conclusion by Jacques Derrida (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 73–142—this translation had been published earlier in *Languages of the Unsayable. The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, edited by Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 3–70. In the remainder of this essay, we will cite the pages of the English translation as republished in 1992 followed by the pages of the French original after a forward slash.

Jacques Derrida by Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida (1991),[13] and the essays "Passions," "Sauf le Nom," and "Khōra" published in separate covers but forming three chapters or steps in an *Essai sur le Nom* (1993).[14] Any project of understanding Derrida's relationship with Neoplatonism must primarily depend upon these items. Since the present writer has already discussed the other works at some length in *Neoplatonism after Derrida. Parallelograms*,[15] the analysis to be pursued here will be based exclusively on "Comment ne pas parler" and *Circonfession*. The dialogues between Derrida and Neoplatonism in these two essays will be considered both separately and in their interrelation, while the Neoplatonism of "Negative Theology" and that of "Conversion" will be seen as the specific issues of the first and second essays respectively.[16]

Neoplatonism and Derrida's "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials"

This essay in the form of a lecture originally given in Jerusalem is formally divided by the author himself into two sections numbered *I*[17] and *II*,[18] the second section containing three subsections labeled *A*,[19] *B*,[20] and *C*.[21]

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[13] Paris: Seuil, 1991. For English translation by Geoffrey Bennington see *Jacques Derrida*, by Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993). In this essay, we will cite the paragraphs which are identically numbered in the English translation and the French original.

[14] Paris: Galilée, 1993 [all three items]. For English translations by David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian McLoed in a single volume see *On the Name*, edited by Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[15] See n. 5.

[16] In these essays and elsewhere, Derrida tends to read Neoplatonism together with certain modern intertexts, the most important by far being Husserl, Heidegger, and Levinas. On Derrida's intertextual readings of Neoplatonism see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 29–38. For Husserlian implications of Derrida's reading of Neoplatonic doctrine see Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name. How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology,'" in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999) pp. 20–53—and especially pp. 39–41—; for Heideggerian implications see Catherine Malabou, "The Form of an 'I,'" in *Augustine and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M.J. Scanlon, pp. 127–143.

[17] *How to Avoid Speaking* 73–96 / *Comment ne pas parler* 535–558. The division given here does not include the important notes added to the essay. The majority of these deal with a controversy over the meaning of Negative Theology between Derrida and Marion.

[18] *HTAS*, pp. 96–131/*CNPP*, pp. 559–595.

[19] *HTAS*, pp. 100–108/*CNPP*, pp. 563–569.

[20] *HTAS*, pp. 108–122/*CNPP*, pp. 569–584.

[21] *HTAS*, pp. 122–129/*CNPP*, pp. 584–592. The volume *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism* contains several essays dealing with questions raised by "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials."

The main discussion of 'How to Avoid Speaking: Denials' *I.* applies what one might term an "ethical" and a "linguistic" version of the trace-structure to Negative Theology, the reference to something that is as necessary as it is impossible showing that the trace structure is to be understood here in both its conjunctive and disjunctive forms.[22] The ethical version occurs in Derrida's numerous references to his promise to speak about Negative Theology: a promise which precedes the discursive event,[23] already belongs to the time of the *parole*,[24] and has seized the "I" which will speak to the "other."[25] This promise which both precedes the event and constitutes the event of speaking about Negative Theology is described as the "singular anteriority of the obligation" which will be the main theme of Derrida's essay.[26] That the ethical structure of the trace is inseparable from the linguistic structure is indicated by Derrida's comments that in being always about to speak of Negative Theology he has already been speaking of it in two stages (*temps*),[27] and that in supplying the title "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" in advance of his lecture the trace of his speaking will have preceded that speaking.[28]

The main discussion of section *I.* also relates Negative Theology closely to the structure of this present text and the structure of its address. The structure of the text is delineated by the progressive establishment of the essay's title in which the author shifts from a first formulation of his topic: That he will speak of Negative Theology,[29] to a second formulation: That he will avoid speaking of it,[30] and then—replacing the statements with questions—, from a third formulation of his topic: How will he speak of

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However, the notion of 'gift' exploited in several of the contributions associates Negative Theology with catholic theology and with Husserl rather than with Neoplatonism. The Neoplatonic analogue of the gift, which does not seem to enter into any of these discussions, would of course be "emanation."

[22] *HTAS*, p. 84/*CNPP*, p. 547.

[23] *HTAS*, p. 82/*CNPP*, p. 545.

[24] *HTAS*, pp. 82–83/*CNPP*, pp. 545–546.

[25] *HTAS*, p. 84/*CNPP*, p. 547.

[26] *HTAS*, p. 73/*CNPP*, p. 535 *singulière antériorité du devoir*. The ethical version of the trace-structure is developed more fully in some of Derrida's other writings. See especially *Donner le temps I. La fausse monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991)—translated by Peggy Kamuf as *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and "Donner la mort," in *L'éthique du don. Jacques Derrida et la pensée du don* (Paris: Métalié-Transition, 1992)—translated by David Wills as *The Gift of Death* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See especially *GT* 24–31/*DLT* 39–48, *GD* 40–52/*DLM* 63–78.

[27] *HTAS*, p. 77/*CNPP*, pp. 539–540.

[28] *HTAS*, p. 86/*CNPP*, pp. 548–549.

[29] *HTAS*, p. 73/*CNPP*, p. 535.

[30] *HTAS*, p. 82/*CNPP*, p. 545.

Negative Theology?,[31] to a fourth formulation: How will he avoid speaking of it?[32] The structure of the address is marked out in passages where the author speaks of Negative Theology or avoids speaking of it to certain earlier critics of his writing,[33] or else to the audience at his lecture in Jerusalem,[34] and where this Negative Theology is described as something of which Dionysius spoke or avoided speaking to his disciple Timothy[35] or of which Meister Eckhart spoke or avoided speaking to the Inquisitors at Avignon.[36]

The main discussion of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" *I.* also clarifies the notion of Negative Theology by making important semantic distinctions within the notion of "not speaking" as such. Most of these occur in the passage where Derrida first states the title of his essay in its final form.[37] Here, he observes that not speaking can be understood as signifying a not speaking or saying altogether—a linguistic sense which might perhaps be labeled *sigetic*. Next, he mentions a second linguistic variety of not speaking: namely, not speaking or saying in the sense of *deferral*. There is also a not speaking associated with situations where one must not speak or say something. This represents a kind of ethical sense of not speaking or saying through *obligation*. He further notes that not speaking can be understood as signifying a not speaking/saying *x*—a logical sense which might perhaps be labeled *predicative*. In another passage, Derrida mentions a second logical variety of not speaking: namely, not speaking or saying in the sense of *denial* (*dénégation*).[38] This sense of not speaking or saying—a negation which denies itself—is simultaneously a speaking or saying.

Finally, the main discussion of section *I.* emphasizes the singularity of the discourse about Negative Theology. Derrida notes that this singularity concerns place in that he is speaking of his chosen subject at a colloquium in Jerusalem,[39] and time in that he is speaking of it finally after many deferrals.[40]

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[31] *HTAS*, pp. 83–84/*CNPP*, pp. 546–547.

[32] *HTAS*, p. 85/*CNPP*, pp. 547–548. In these formulations Derrida alternates between French (*Comment ne pas dire …*) and English expressions (*How to avoid speaking …*).

[33] *HTAS*, pp. 75–76, 88–89/*CNPP*, pp. 537–538, 551.

[34] *HTAS*, pp. 73, 84 /*CNPP*, pp. 535, 547.

[35] *HTAS*, pp. 116–117/*CNPP*, pp. 578–579. Derrida begins the citation of various texts by (pseudo-) Dionysius and Meister Eckhart early in his essay. However, the most important citations occur in part *II*.

[36] *HTAS*, pp. 113–114/*CNPP*, p. 576.

[37] *HTAS*, p. 85/*CNPP*, pp. 547–548.

[38] *HTAS*, pp. 94–95/*CNPP*, p. 557. Derrida himself does not apply technical terms to what we have here called "sigetic" and "predicative."

[39] *HTAS*, pp. 73, 83, 97/*CNPP*, pp. 535, 546, 559.

[40] *HTAS*, p. 82/*CNPP*, p. 545.

The inseparability of this place and this time in the taking place of the event gives the discussion of "How to Avoid Speaking" a definite autobiographical character. As we shall see, this autobiographical character is further revealed in the tension between Derrida's discussion of the Christian paradigms of Negative Theology later in the essay and his silence with respect to negative-theological tendencies in the Jewish and Islamic traditions.[41]

Section *I.* of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" also contains a detailed account of the relation between what the Neoplatonists call "Negative Theology" and what deconstruction calls "trace." This can be followed through two preliminary notes[42] and an insert in the main argument of section *I.*[43] The preliminary notes provide some historical contextualization and a general definition of Negative Theology respectively. The insert replies to critics who had accused him of resifting the procedures of Negative Theology in his implementation of the deconstructive project.[44] Derrida here provides statements of how his critics had incorrectly identified Negative Theology and the trace[45] and of how Negative Theology and the trace should actually be distinguished from one another.[46] As we are now informed, he had always wanted to speak of the "network of questions set up in too hasty a manner under the rubric of Negative Theology."[47]

We may perhaps summarize what Derrida says about the relation between Negative Theology and the trace in the preliminary notes and the insert. First, there is a quasi-definition of Negative Theology. This characterizes it as an attitude towards language and, more specifically, to the act of definition or attribution or to semantic or conceptual determination which assumes that every predicative language is inadequate to the essence of God, and that only a negative attribution can claim to approach God and prepare us for a silent intuition of him.[48] The argument of Derrida's critics that trace-structure is equivalent to Negative Theology is reported briefly. This states that *a.* deconstruction imitates the mechanical technique of Negative Theology, that *b.* it constitutes a purely rhetorical activity, and that *c.*

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[41] *HTAS*, p. 122/*CNPP*, p. 584. Cf. *HTAS*, p. 108/*CNPP*, pp. 569–570.
[42] *HTAS*, pp. 73–74/*CNPP*, pp. 535–536.
[43] *HTAS*, pp. 74–82/*CNPP*, pp. 536–545.
[44] *HTAS*, pp. 74–75/*CNPP*, p. 537.
[45] *HTAS*, pp. 75–77/*CNPP*, pp. 537–539.
[46] *HTAS*, pp. 77–82/*CNPP*, pp. 540–545.
[47] *HTAS*, p. 77/*CNPP*, p. 539 *le réseau de questions qu'on noue de façon trop hâtive sous le titre de 'théologie négative'*.
[48] *HTAS*, p. 74/*CNPP*, p. 536.

it transforms all discourse into theology.[49] The argument of Derrida himself that trace-structure is not equivalent to Negative Theology is given at greater length. This states that *1*. Negative Theology depends on utterances of "strictly propositional form,"[50] *2*. concerns *a*. an object which is "a being beyond being," and *b*. a "movement towards super-essentiality,"[51] *3*. concerns *a*. an object which is determined by "presence," and *b*. "the promise of that presence,"[52] and *4*. balances affirmative and negative utterances,[53] whereas none of these features belong the trace. Finally, there is a quasi-definition of the trace. This characterizes it as an "X"—for example, *différance, hymen, supplément, pharmakon, parergon*—which is neither a concept nor a name although it lends itself to a series of names, which exceeds the structure of predicative discourse, which is neither a "this" nor a "that" nor a "sublation" (*Aufhebung*), which calls for an alternative syntax, and which "is" not although it "will have been."[54]

Of course, Derrida does not simply contrast Negative Theology and the trace on the basis of these quasi-definitions. This is because an explicit project of Negative Theology cannot be attributed to any thinker, and the unity of its "archive" (*archive*) is difficult to delimit.[55] Also according to Derrida, there is indeed "a more or less tenable analogy" between Negative Theology and the trace.[56] The nature of this analogy is not specified in Section *I*. of the essay, although an initial impression of it can be gained from a further insert in the main argument.[57]

This insert is explicitly described by Derrida himself as a digression on what he terms the "secret" (*secret*). It performs the important textual function of developing certain implications of the title "How to Avoid Speaking"—namely, the affirmation of a secret as such which, as affirmation, is

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[49] *HTAS*, pp. 75–76/*CNPP*, pp. 537–538.

[50] *HTAS*, p. 77/*CNPP*, p. 540 *forme strictement propositionnelle*.

[51] *HTAS*, pp. 77–79/*CNPP*, pp. 540–542 *un être au-delà de l'être … mouvement vers l'hyperessentialité*. Derrida also introduces the relevant Greek terms: *hyperousios, -ōs, -ousiotēs*.

[52] *HTAS*, pp. 79–81/*CNPP*, pp. 542–544 *la présence … la promesse de cette présence*.

[53] *HTAS*, p. 81/*CNPP*, p. 544. Derrida indicates the last point by referring to a "paradoxical economy" (*économie paradoxale*). Points *1* and 4 of this account particularly emphasize what Derrida sees as the "formalistic" aspect of Negative Theology. See further the concluding remarks of this chapter on pp. 27–28.

[54] *HTAS*, pp. 74, 79, 81/*CNPP*, pp. 536, 542, 544–545. In these passages, Derrida comes close to presenting a classical formulation of the "trace-structure" analyzed earlier. See pp. 2–4 and n. 9.

[55] *HTAS*, pp. 73–74/*CNPP*, pp. 535–536.

[56] *HTAS*, p. 74/*CNPP*, p. 536 *une analogie plus ou moins soutenable*.

[57] *HTAS*, pp. 86–96/*CNPP*, pp. 549–558.

the secret shared within an esoteric social group[58]—and also of establishing the presuppositions of the subtitle "Denials"—namely, the denial of a secret as such which, as denial, is the secret shared by Derrida and his allies[59]—, the entire argument showing clearly that Derrida's secret is not something having a unitary presence. In the course of this digression—which contains numerous allusions to Negative Theology[60]—several important further points are made. First, the secret is associated with a place (*lieu*) in the sense of a disjunctive trace-structure embracing the individual who possesses a secret and the individual from whom it is withheld.[61] Secondly, the secret is said to be the modality (*modalité*)—indeed the only modality—in which the name of God can be uttered.[62] Third, the individual who withholds a secret from another within the disjunctive trace-structure is said to employ a double theological language of concealment and demonstration.[63] In connection with these points, Derrida introduces various motifs which will be developed in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" *II*. These are: place in the sense of promise,[64] place in the sense of rhetorical symbols or allegories,[65] and place in the sense of event.[66] In the same context, he also adumbrates certain themes of the later part of the essay: for example, the identification of place with *Khōra* and with the seal.

"How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" *II* consists of an introduction stating that this part of the essay will study Negative Theology in terms of place, and in three stages (*étapes, temps*),[67] and a main discussion dealing with these three stages—also called signs (*signes*), paradigms (*paradigmes*), and places (*lieux*)—in sequence.[68] Given that place has now clearly become the privileged expression of the trace-structure, we can detect an important shift in Derrida's argument at this point. Having explained how Negative Theology was incorrectly identified with the trace and how Negative Theology and the

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[58] *HTAS*, pp. 86–89/*CNPP*, pp. 549–551.

[59] *HTAS*, p. 95/*CNPP*, pp. 557–558.

[60] *HTAS*, pp. 90–91, 95–96/*CNPP*, pp. 552–554, 558.

[61] *HTAS*, p. 91/*CNPP*, pp. 553–554.

[62] *HTAS*, p. 95/*CNPP*, p. 558.

[63] *HTAS*, pp. 94–95/*CNPP*, pp. 557–558. Derrida discusses the "secret" in several other texts written around the same time. See especially the treatment in the essay "Passions." On this point see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 183–196.

[64] *HTAS*, pp. 92–93/*CNPP*, p. 555.

[65] *HTAS*, pp. 93–95/*CNPP*, pp. 556–558.

[66] *HTAS*, pp. 95–96/*CNPP*, p. 558. Derrida here speaks of "an event, that which takes place" (*un événement, ce qui a lieu ou "takes place"*).

[67] *HTAS*, pp. 96–100/*CNPP*, pp. 559–563.

[68] *HTAS*, pp. 100–129/*CNPP*, pp. 563–592.

trace should actually be distinguished from one another in part *I*, he now turns to an explanation—or rather, an exemplification—of Negative Theology *within* the trace-structure in part *II*.[69] Our comments on this part of the essay will focus upon what is said about place as such in the introduction and about the relation between the three stages or paradigms and place in the main section.

In the introduction to part *II*, Derrida has much to say on the question of place as such. One of the main aims of this section is clearly to distinguish place in the sense of rhetorical figures,[70] in the sense of what we termed the "ethical" and the "linguistic" versions of the trace-structure in part *I*, and in the sense of event.[71] Most of the new developments occur in connection with the linguistic version of the trace-structure which the writer comes close to articulating in its most complete form. This consists of *a*. the being older than, the preceding, or the rendering possible of the linguistic act; *b*. discourse in general, the distinction between meaning (*sens*) and reference (*référence*), specific forms of discourse like proposition or prayer, and the question "How to Avoid Speaking" itself; and *c*. the trace of the other or the call of the other, language before language, the assumed origin of speech, and what is "other than being" (*autre que l'être*).[72] Among these moments *a*. corresponds to the negative term, *b*. to the positive term, and *c*. to the neutral term within the trace-structure. Derrida now introduces a further semantic structure in contrasting *a*. the possible absence of a referent; *b*. reference to the other, or the other as referent, reference and truth; and *c*. absolute reference (*référent absolu*), or first and last reference—these moments corresponding within the trace-structure to the negative, positive, and neutral terms respectively. Derrida also introduces an analogous theological structure in contrasting *a*. the effect of, the proceeding from, or the gift of something; *b*. the power of saying or not saying this, or the power of speaking or not speaking at all; and *c*. what can be called God, Cause, or Gift, and the name of God (*le nom de Dieu*)—these moments again corresponding within the trace-structure to the negative, positive, and neutral terms respectively.

The introduction to "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" *II* also considers the relation between the three stages or paradigms of Negative Theology and

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[69] This "recursive" structure of exemplification will be developed further in "Circumfession." See our discussion on pp. 22–23 below.

[70] *HTAS*, p. 97/*CNPP*, p. 559.

[71] *HTAS*, pp. 97–98/*CNPP*, pp. 559–561.

[72] *HTAS*, pp. 97–98/*CNPP*, pp. 559–561.

place.[73] First, Derrida describes the character of these stages or paradigms. He explains that they are not phases in a dialectical or teleological process and not the moments of a history,[74] and notes that they are somewhat akin to "architectural models."[75] He then turns to the interrelation between the stages or paradigms. Here, he notes that they surround "a certain void, the place of a desert, a resonant space of which nothing or almost nothing will ever be said".[76] These arguments continue in the main section of part *II* where Derrida shows that the three stages or paradigms of Negative Theology will be based on *A*. Plato, *B*. pseudo-Dionysius and Meister Eckhart, and *C*. Heidegger. In the transition between stages or paradigms *A* and *B*, he characterizes the interrelation between the stages or paradigms as an 'event'. Here, he explains that what happens between these stages is not a history of influences, structures, or relations but rather the "event of the event" or the thought of "an essential having-taken-place."[77] In the introduction to stage or paradigm *C*, he inserts the stages or paradigms into the trace-structure by noting that the first paradigm will be Greek, the second Christian without ceasing to be Greek, and the third neither Greek nor Christian.[78]

In the main discussion of part *II*, Derrida shifts his discussion of the relation between the three stages or paradigms of Negative Theology and place from the argument that the three stages or paradigms are delimited by place or event to a demonstration that each stage or paradigm itself defines a place or event. Thus, paradigm *A* based on Plato begins with a discussion of the transcendent super-essence of the *Republic* and the notion of *Khōra* ("place") in the *Timaeus*, the second term being the Greek word for "place" converted into a proper name. Paradigm *B* climaxes with a discussion of pseudo-Dionysius' notion of the place of God and Eckhart's notion of a place in the soul. Paradigm *C* based on Heidegger begins with a discussion of the movement of transcendence in *On the Essence of Ground* and the notion of *khōrismos* ("separation") in *What is Called Thinking?*, the second term being a verbal echo of the corresponding item in the first paradigm.

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[73] *HTAS*, pp. 96, 100/*CNPP*, pp. 559, 562–563.

[74] *HTAS*, p. 100/*CNPP*, p. 562.

[75] *HTAS*, p. 100/*CNPP*, p. 563 *modèle*[*s*] *de construction*.

[76] *HTAS*, p. 100/*CNPP*, pp. 562–563 *un certain vide, le lieu d'un désert … un espace de résonance dont il ne sera jamais rien dit, presque rien*.

[77] *HTAS*, p. 109/*CNPP*, p. 570 *l'événement de l'événement … un 'avoir-eu-lieu' essentiel*. Also: 'eventuality' (*événementialité*).

[78] *HTAS*, p. 122/*CNPP*, p. 584. Within the trace-structure, these paradigms or stages obviously correspond to the positive term, the combined term, and the neutral term respectively.

The Platonic paradigm *A*,[79] in that it raises questions about the ontological status and about the structure of address with respect to both the Good beyond Being and to *Khōra*, exhibits a certain parallelism. Regarding the ontological status of the Good, Derrida concludes that what is beyond being remains a being in Plato's eyes at least in the sense that its causality is assumed.[80] He also notes that Plato entertains the possibility of addressing the Good at one point in his text.[81] Regarding the ontological status of *Khōra*, Derrida notes that Plato speaks of this principle in "two concurrent languages" (*deux langages concurrents*): the one underlining the relation to metaphysics by associating it with participation, allowing the neither/nor to become both/and, inserting it anachronistically into the history of philosophy, and expressing it in metaphors, the other mapping it onto a trace-structure by denying all these features.[82] Derrida also argues that *Khōra* is primarily not something that exists but something that is addressed.[83]

The relation to Neoplatonism emerges more clearly in Derrida's treatment of paradigm *B*.[84] Here, a close reading of various passages in *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, *De Divinis Nominibus*, and *De Mystica Theologia* of pseudo-Dionysius and in the sermons "Like a Morning-Star" and "Be Renewed in Spirit" of Meister Eckhart enables the writer to articulate the relation between Negative Theology and the trace-structure with considerable subtlety. The reading of pseudo-Dionysius focuses first on the text's exploitation of prayer. According to Derrida, prayer is a linguistic form having as its most important characteristics *a*. that it establishes the objective referent of Negative Theology, *b*. that it is a non-predicative language of address to the Other—in this respect it is similar to but different from encomium which represents a mixture of non-predicative language of address to the Other

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[79] *HTAS*, pp. 100–108/*CNPP*, pp. 563–569.

[80] *HTAS*, pp. 102–103/*CNPP*, pp. 564–565. Strictly speaking, Derrida argues that other things "draw from the Good" (*tiennent ... du Bien*) their being and their being-known. This entire discussion raises the important question of Plato's "onto-theology." See our discussion on p. 26 below.

[81] *HTAS*, p. 103/*CNPP*, p. 565.

[82] *HTAS*, pp. 104–106/*CNPP*, pp. 566–568. This passage provides a very clear instance of the contrast between Plato's and Derrida's different articulations of the trace-structure. Here, Derrida enacts the trace with respect to Plato by taking the first (Platonic) language and then identifying it with the combined term and contrasting it with the neutral term of the second (deconstructive) language.

[83] *HTAS*, p. 107/*CNPP*, p. 569. Derrida discusses *khōra* in several other texts written around the same time. See especially the treatment in the essay "*Khōra*." For more detailed discussion see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 125–137.

[84] *HTAS*, pp. 108–122/*CNPP*, pp. 569–584.

and predicative language of statement about the Other—, *c*. that it prepares the union between subject and object sought by Negative Theology.[85] The reading of pseudo-Dionysius then takes up the question of place. When pseudo-Dionysius prays to God, and then addresses his disciple Timothy, quoting his prayer, Derrida argues not only that there is a place in which these addresses occur, but that the places of prayer, quotation, and apostrophe are inseparable.[86] The reading of Meister Eckhart focuses on the text's "multiplication of voices and discourses" (*démultiplication des voix et des discours*). According to Derrida, the logical opposition between negative and affirmative predicates applied to God can be understood as a hermeneutic opposition between meanings or voices, this opposition being simultaneously with respect to the terms interpreted—for example, the phrase "being without being" used by Augustine—and the interpreters of the terms—for example, Meister Eckhart himself and the Hermetic source of his teaching.[87] The reading of Meister Eckhart also takes up the question of place. When Meister Eckhart describes God's creation of a hidden power in the soul capable of achieving union with the super-essential Being of God, Derrida notes that the use of the term receptacle for this hidden power recalls Plato's use of the same term for the principle of *Khōra*.[88]

The Heideggerian paradigm *C*[89] is perhaps most notable for the manner in which it connects semantic distinctions within the notion of "not speaking" with the notion of place. Here, Derrida selects for comment Heidegger's device of placing the word "being" under erasure (*sous rature*)[90]—i.e. where a special written form B~~e~~ing having both the negative sense of not being *a* being and also the affirmative senses of being readable, being divisible into four regions, and being a point of maximal intensity is introduced into the discussion—and also Heidegger's proposed exclusion of "being" from theological inquiry.[91] Although Derrida argues that the German writer's arguments are often hard to follow, he notes that place is clearly at issue in both these instances.[92]

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[85] *HTAS*, pp. 109–112/*CNPP*, pp. 570–575.
[86] *HTAS*, pp. 116–118/*CNPP*, pp. 578–581.
[87] *HTAS*, pp. 113–116/*CNPP*, pp. 575–578.
[88] *HTAS*, p. 120/*CNPP*, p. 583.
[89] *HTAS*, pp. 122–129/*CNPP*, pp. 584–592.
[90] *HTAS*, pp. 125–126/*CNPP*, pp. 588–589.
[91] *HTAS*, pp. 126–128/*CNPP*, pp. 590–592.
[92] *HTAS*, pp. 125–126/*CNPP*, pp. 589–590.

The Structural Relation between Derrida's Two Readings of Neoplatonism

Derrida's engagement with the metaphysical tenets of Neoplatonism in "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations" is complemented by his similar approach in *Circonfession: Cinquante-neuf périodes et périphrases*. In fact, his readings of pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine may be seen as complementary from a structural viewpoint, although the extent to which this relation was consciously promoted by the author is a matter of speculation. In terms of mode of approach, the relatively theoretical and generic response to the subject-matter of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" may be compared and contrasted with the relatively practical and singular response to the same issues in "Circumfession."[93] With respect to this subject-matter, the conception of the relation between the three paradigms and Negative Theology as place or event in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" may be compared and contrasted with the conception of the relation between the 59 compulsions and Conversion as place or event in "Circumfession."[94] Moreover, the conception of the relation between the deconstructive and the Platonic languages implied by the Greek term *Khōra* in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" may be compared and contrasted with the conception of the relation between circumcision and confession implied by the portmanteau-word *Circon+Fession* itself.[95]

Neoplatonism and Derrida's "Circumfession"

Derrida's "Circumfession" consists of 59 paragraphs of one convoluted sentence each—the "periods" or "periphrases" of the subtitle—written in the

[93] Perhaps we should not over-emphasize the distinction between the two texts. In an important note attached to his account of the three paradigms in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," Derrida describes his text as "the most 'autobiographical'" (*le plus 'autobiographique'*) he has ever risked. He explains this by saying that he has been engaging in a process of self-presentation through a discussion of the negative theology of others, and that he has so far been unable to speak of what his birth should have made closest to him: the Jew, the Arab (*HTAS*, p. 136, n. 13/*CNPP*, p. 562, n. 1). The obviously "autobiographical" aspect of the "Circumfession" can therefore be seen as fulfilling the promise of "How to Avoid Speaking."

[94] As we shall see demonstrated below, Negative Theology and Conversion may be understood as complementary realizations of the trace-structure or fourfold structure.

[95] On the "two languages" of *Khōra* see p. 13 above.

margin of Geoffrey Bennington's book about Derrida entitled "Derrida-base."[96] The work differs radically in style from the one previously considered in a number of ways. Perhaps most obviously, it is articulated from the start in terms of its explicit inter-textual relations—or non-relations—on the one hand to Augustine's *Confessions* and on the other to Bennington's treatise. In addition to this, the expression-plane and the content-plane of Derrida's discourse are designed to reflect one another in keeping with his interpretation of the Augustinian notion of "making the Truth."[97] Consequently, the text deliberately avoids—and indeed explicitly sets out to question—the systematical organization of a logical argument. In order to analyze it here, we shall reuse the conceptual structure deduced from the earlier essay.

"Circumfession" as a whole utilizes both the "ethical" and "linguistic" versions of the trace-structure. The ethical version of the trace-structure is stated most fully in the author's report of his dream of conversing with Jean-Pierre Vernant in an underground place about the principle of taking responsibility for a crime that one has not personally committed.[98] When Derrida refers to the subject constituted by the category of the accepted accusation, the hiatus finally circumscribed, and the subject configured by the knife of the economy, he shows once again that the trace-structure is to be understood in both its conjunctive and its disjunctive forms. The linguistic version of the trace-structure is articulated throughout "Circumfession" but is perhaps presented most graphically in a passage where Derrida meditates on the French word *escarre* meaning *a*. (in anatomy), the scab on some part of the body and *b*. (in heraldry), the compartment of a shield formed by a square enclosing one of the corners, and connecting metonymically with the English word "scar," etc. Here, the motif of his mother's bedsores—and his own facial paralysis—is associated with the notion of writing itself, and Derrida explains that he loves words because he has no words of his own but only *escarres*: traces of other texts and genealogies *en abîme*.[99]

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[96] On this work see the recent collection of essays: *Augustine and Postmodernism, Confessions and Circumfession*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M.J. Scanlon.

[97] Derrida later modified his interpretation of "making the truth" in order to make the sense of its *event*-structure more radical. However, the modification tends to reinforce rather than undermine the interpretation of his authorial intentions proposed here. See Jacques Derrida, "Composing 'Circumfession,'" in *Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M.J. Scanlon, pp. 19–27 and especially pp. 20–21, 23, 26.

[98] *Circum/Circon*. §56.

[99] *Circum/Circon*. §18. Derrida's references to the *escarre* and *mise-en-abîme* allude to possible visual depictions of the fourfold trace-structure.

'Circumfession' also discusses the structure of its own text and the structure of that text's address. The structure of the text is at issue in passages where Derrida states a kind of theory of self-citation using the figure of circumcision, for instance where he argues that in this process he is tearing off his own skin while reading others like an angel,[100] and in passages where he implements the practice of self-citation in association with the same figure, for example where he quotes his own earlier notebooks for a projected *Livre d'Élie* on the topic of circumcision.[101] The structure of the address is at issue in passages where Derrida speaks variously of his relation to the Other: namely, as a relation to "what I call 'God' in my language,"[102] as a relation to Geoffrey Bennington who never quotes exactly from Derrida's corpus,[103] as a relation to his mother who does not recognize him, or is silent towards him, or does not read him,[104] as a relation to you whom Derrida will never completely know,[105] and as a relation to *sA* = saint Augustin or *savoir absolu*.[106]

"Circumfession" as a whole places considerable emphasis on the notion of singularity, as indicated in the complex interplay of Derrida's readings of Augustine's writing, of Derrida's comments on his own writing, and of Derrida's readings of Augustine's life, punctuated with many individual dates and locations.[107] To cite a few instances: Derrida reads Augustine's *writing* singularly when, having quoted the latter's insistence on the distinction between things in the firmament and bodily works, he comments that he will never write like *sA* since he has more than these two languages—the figural and the other—and at least four rabbis.[108] In fact, he constantly opposes the universality of Bennington's book about him to the singularity of his own writing of "Circumfession," noting that *G* = Geoffrey wishes to produce a generative grammar of his writing—a "theological program" (*théologiciel*) of absolute knowledge—and thereby deprive him of his events, but that he—whose writing cannot be pre-constructed from a matrix and admits the un-anticipatable singularity of the event—will always destabilize or

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100 *Circum/Circon*. § 45.
101 *Circum/Circon*. §§ 11, 14 ff., 52.
102 *Circum/Circon*. § 30 *ce que j'appelle Dieu dans mon langage*.
103 *Circum/Circon*. § 5.
104 *Circum/Circon*. §§ 5, 7, 12, 27, 34, 44, 51.
105 *Circum/Circon*. § 41.
106 *Circum/Circon*. §§ 10–11, 20, etc. It is notable that many of these passages utilize what we have termed the *sigetic* sense of not speaking or saying in combination with a trace-structure which may be understood in both its conjunctive and its disjunctive form.
107 *Circum/Circon*. §§ 3, 29, 49, 52, etc.
108 *Circum/Circon*. § 47. This is another reference to the fourfold structure of the trace.

disconcert it.[109] The singularity of Derrida's own writing is stated in the notebook mentioned above to be where its principle of thematic or formal selection is no longer two columns of text, the letters *Gl*, or the number 7 used in certain earlier works but the idiom that makes or lets him write,[110] and in the "Circumfession" itself to be where the writing is no longer trying to rediscover itself according to some regular or "geologically programmed" (*géologicielle*) relation between chance and necessity but leaves itself to be invented by the other.[111] Derrida reads Augustine's *life* singularly when, having described a facial paralysis which deprived him of the respite of *Augenblick* and forced him to speak the truth sideways, he proposes this surprise of an event happening to himself in which he is no longer himself as a reading of Augustine's famous "conversion."[112] The absolute singularity of this event is indicated by its association with a specific place and date: a clinic at Neuilly—from which Derrida telephones Bennington, as though telephoning God, before going into a tomb-like X-ray scanner—on 29 June, 1989.[113]

"Circumfession" has much to say about the relation between the deconstructive "trace" and metaphysical thinking—the latter including whatever might loosely be termed "Neoplatonism," or "Negative Theology," or "Augustinism"—Derrida's main purpose being to demonstrate the non-equivalence between the trace-structure and such metaphysical notions. We might summarize the main points of difference as follows. Deconstruction *a*. is an activity which "makes the truth"[114]—rather than a truth which is uncreated—; *b*. is both "example" and "counter-example"[115]—rather than purely exemplary—; *c*. depends on the future[116]—rather than on the present—; and *d*. is a "truth of non-knowledge"[117]—rather than a truth which

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[109] *Circum/Circon*. §§ 3, 5–6, 28, 51. The letter *G* also signifies Derrida's mother Georgette (who is therefore substitutable with Geoffrey).

[110] *Circum/Circon*. § 52.

[111] *Circum/Circon*. § 55. The term *géologiciel* has a metonymic relation with *théologiciel* (both terms suggesting a computer program (*logiciel*)).

[112] *Circum/Circon*. §§ 24–25.

[113] *Circum/Circon*. § 19.

[114] *Circum/Circon*. §§ 9, 11, 27, 36, 53 *veritatem facere = faire la vérité*. With respect to the eight points of difference to be listed here, Derrida only states the properties of the trace-structure explicitly. However, the contrasting properties of metaphysics can easily be deduced.

[115] *Circum/Circon*. § 36 *exemple … contre-exemple*. Cf. § 50.

[116] *Circum/Circon*. § 28.

[117] *Circum/Circon*. § 28 *vérité de* [*ce*] *non-savoir*.

is knowable. In addition, deconstruction *a*. is a series of "compulsions"[118]—rather than the unity of a consciousness—; *b*. is an activity of "writing"[119]—rather than an activity of thinking—; *c*. is a confession which "gives beyond the circle"[120]—rather than a confession limited by the circle—; and *d*. is an "experimentation of one's possible survival"[121]—rather than a conviction regarding one's definite survival.

Of course, Derrida does not simply contrast the deconstructive trace and metaphysical thinking but implements the deconstruction *of* metaphysics throughout the text of "Circumfession." This practice can be illustrated by several important passages which defy summary for obvious reasons. One such passage deconstructs Negative Theology in terms of winning and losing, by connecting references to his mother's inclination towards poker and to his own game-playing relation to Bennington with the indefinite referral, so-called negative theology, the play with the names of God, and the substitution of one bank for another.[122] Elsewhere, Derrida deconstructs the simultaneously transcendent and immanent relation between God and the Soul—where the One has always been more intimate to Jackelie than himself—by writing of the four-stage *escarre* of God, the wound of circumcision in which Derrida returns to himself, gathers himself, and colonizes hell, and the *escarre* as sponge absorbing and expressing blood.[123] Another passage deconstructs Negative Theology in terms of selection by the other, by making what happened at the rue saint-Augustin between 1929 and 1934—Derrida's birth as substitution for his dead brother Paul Moïse—the object of his non-knowledge in the night of learned ignorance.[124] These deconstructions of metaphysics are implicit examples of theology in what he termed elsewhere the modality of the "secret."[125] In "Circumfession," this structure is simultaneously a secret as such, in the form of a sealed text or an indecipherable letter which is understood neither by Derrida nor by anyone else,[126] and

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118 *Circum/Circon*. § 25 *compulsions*.

119 *Circum/Circon*. § 28 *éxriture*.

120 *Circum/Circon*. § 45 *donne au-delà du cercle*. Cf. § 21.

121 *Circum/Circon*. § 36 *l'expérimentation … de* [*ma*] *survie possible*.

122 *Circum/Circon*. § 8. This passage again emphasizes what Derrida sees as the 'formalistic' aspect of Negative Theology. See further the concluding remarks of this chapter on pp. 27–28.

123 *Circum/Circon*. §§ 20–21. Derrida's four-stage *escarre* at the same time constitutes a trace-structure and substitutes for Augustine's Trinitarian God.

124 *Circum/Circon*. § 52.

125 See pp. 9–10 above.

126 *Circum/Circon*. §§ 48, 58.

also a secret shared within a social group, as exemplified by Derrida's name of Elie which had been transferred to him without his knowledge from his great-uncle Abraham and his uncle Eugène.[127] Among explicit examples of theology in the modality of the secret the following are particularly noteworthy. In one passage, Derrida deconstructs the fourfold model of Jewish exegesis: *1. Pshat*: literality, *2. R'Emez*: allegory, secret, diverted word, *3. Drash*: morality, and *4. Soud*: profundity, cabbalism by identifying it with a beehive sponge of secrets.[128] Elsewhere, he deconstructs the omnipresence of God by saying that it is neither a transcendent law nor an immanent *schechina*, but the properly theological hypothesis of a blank sacrifice sending the bidding up to infinity, and also that the secret from which one is excluded is this circulation of God among the un-avowable as he remains un-avowable in himself.[129] Another passage deconstructs the Christian notion of confessing oneself to God by identifying it with certain inherited secrets of which one knows nothing but for which one confesses others: for example, the familial relation between Esther and the two Elie's.[130]

In addition to the structural parallels between "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" and "Circumfession" which we have been silently exploiting during the last few pages, the relation between the paradigms *A, B, C* introduced in part *II* of the earlier essay and the periods 1–59 seems important enough to require a more extended analysis at this point. This analysis will be focused on three primary questions: the relation of the periods to "Circumfession" as a whole, the structures of exemplarity and substitution and of the fourfold place-event, and the relations of prayer and of multiplication of voices to the periods.

Although it is easy to collect passages dealing with the relation of the periods (*périodes*) to "Circumfession" as a whole—they are clearly marked by the recurrence of the number 59 together with a term connoting circularity such as jar, band, pivot, circumference, rotation,[131]—it is more difficult to determine what the passages tell us about that relation. However, the connection between Derrida's statements that he must learn to "read himself

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[127] *Circum/Circon*. § 35. The fourfold Jewish exegesis constitutes a trace-structure. It may also be intended to correspond to the Christian fourfold exegesis.

[128] *Circum/Circon*. § 21.

[129] *Circum/Circon*. § 30. *Schechina* is a cosmological principle in the kabbalistic system. Its mention constitutes a rare reference to *Jewish* Neoplatonism in "Circumfession."

[130] *Circum/Circon*. § 36.

[131] *Circum/Circon*. §§ 27, 47, 49, 50–51, 53, 58. Derrida also calls them prayers and conjurations in §§ 49, 51.

from his compulsions,"[132] of which there are 59, and that "each one is an Augustinian *cogito*"[133] seems significant. Given the nature of the Augustinian subject as a circular movement to the self (and God), Derrida seems to be proposing a mode of reading the latter which is both circular and numerical and both unique and generic. The circular aspect of the reading seems to be exemplified by Derrida's account of seeing the word "cascade" for the first time and turning around it in an experience which is like the birth of a love affair and the origin of the earth[134]—clearly a unique occurrence—and also by his statement that it is enough to pivot the six words: *ça n'arrive qu'à moi* ("It only happens to me") to have the whole of this "Circumfession"[135]—a reference to the general structure of the work. The numerical aspect seems to be illustrated by Derrida's apparent reference to the yearly and weekly cycles in suggesting that 59 can be understood as 52 + 7—a further reference to the general structure of "Circumfession"[136]—and also by his statement that he was 59 years old when he experienced the facial paralysis of Lyme's disease,[137] is visiting his bed-ridden mother in Nice,[138] and embarks on the writing of "Circumfession"[139]—clearly another unique occurrence. If Derrida is indeed proposing a mode of reading the Augustinian subject which is both circular and numerical and individual and generic in this fabric of interwoven motifs, it becomes possible to explain a further connection that is implied. This is between the statements that he "has to learn to read the 'conversion' while his mother is still alive"[140]—there being only one of these—and that he must learn to "read himself from his

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[132] *Circum/Circon*. § 24 *me lire depuis les compulsions*. At § 58 Derrida speaks of his "repetition compulsion" (*compulsion de répétition*) and therefore links compulsion with the process of reading. See p. 27 below.

[133] *Circum/Circon*. § 25.

[134] *Circum/Circon*. § 50.

[135] *Circum/Circon*. § 58. Or: it is enough to pivot *one* word *six times*. Bennington masks the sense of this passage by translating the French *6 mots* with the English "5 words".—a change which is of course justifiable in terms of the different syntaxes of the two languages. However, Derrida's reference to 6 is intended to recall the six words uttered by God = six days of creation in Augustine's interpretation of *Genesis*. In this manner, we can understand the event-structure of the "Circumfession" as a deconstruction of the logos-structure of the biblical cosmology.

[136] *Circum/Circon*. §§ 50–51, 53.

[137] *Circum/Circon*. § 23.

[138] *Circon/Circum*. §§ 27, 29.

[139] *Circum/Circon*. § 49.

[140] *Curcum/Circon*. § 24 *'conversion' … il me faut apprendre à la lire pendant que ma mère vit encore*.

compulsions." If our interpretation is plausible, the relation of the periods to "Circumfession" as a whole is reflected in the connection between compulsion, the Augustinian *cogito*, and conversion which is simultaneously 59-fold and one-fold.[141]

Now the passage where Conversion is explicitly associated with the facial paralysis shows clearly that we are dealing with both a place and an event in the deconstructive sense of those terms. Derrida describes the visual effect of this paralysis as a dislocation in which one has "more places than one should have … the topology here both being and not being a figure" and then goes on to speak of the paralysis as "the surprise of an event happening to 'myself' who am therefore no longer myself."[142] Given that the relation of the periods to "Circumfession" as a whole is reflected in the nature of Conversion and therefore constitutes a simultaneously 59-fold and one-fold place or event, Derrida's later statements to the effect that each of the 59 periods encircles "a Nothing in which God reminds Derrida of himself,"[143] represents a "counter-example" or "counter-truth" of himself,[144] and contains four "synchronistic" or "anachronistic" moments,[145] take on a special significance.

The structure of exemplarity and substitution which appears here in "Circumfession" parallels the structure of the paradigms in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials."[146] In this structure, the exemplary is the "X" which may be postulated as the primary example within a series of related terms, whereas the substitutive is any "X" which may be postulated as any example or counter-example within a series of related terms, the structure being recursive in that the contrast between the exemplary and the substitutive itself can be stated in both exemplary and substitutive terms. The exemplary normally corresponds to the sphere of the transcendent, the logically necessary, and the universal, and Derrida here associates it specifically with the God who

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[141] It should not be forgotten that both the title of the whole work (*circon* (→*circonfession*)) and the subtitle referring to the constituent parts (*péri* (→59 *périodes et périphrases*)) exploit the notion of circularity. Circularity is therefore the feature connecting the two levels of structure.

[142] *Circum/Circon*. § 24 *plus de lieux qu'il ne faut … la topologie étant et n'étant plus ici une figure … la surprise d'un événement m'arrivant à 'moi-même', qui ne le suis donc plus*.

[143] *Circum/Circon*. § 51 *un Rien où Dieu se rappelle à moi*.

[144] *Circum/Circon*. § 48 *contre-vérités … contre-exemplarités*.

[145] Compare *Circum/Circon*. § 21 *synchroniser les quatre temps* … with § 29 *l'anachronisme* … quatre *époques distinctes*. Cf. also § 25.

[146] Compare the reference to the 59 periods as encircling a Nothing (see n. 143) with that to the three paradigms encircling a Nothing (see n. 76).

knows everything[147] or the distinction between mind and body.[148] The substitutive normally corresponds to the sphere of the non-transcendent, the logically contingent, and the particular, Derrida associating this specifically with the God who stands for anybody[149] or the distinction between himself and his counter-examples or counter-truths.[150]

The structure of exemplarity and substitution may, in principle, be combined with the structure of the fourfold place-event.[151] Here, the "X" which has been postulated as the primary example within a series of related terms may be understood as the neutral term of the fourfold structure, whereas the "X" which has been postulated as any example or counter-example within a series of related terms may be understood as either the negative, or the combined, or the positive term of that structure. When the structure of exemplarity and substitution occurs in its basic form, its combination with the structure of the fourfold place-event in a disjunctive mode is possible, but when the structure of exemplarity and substitution occurs in its regressive form, its combination with the structure of the fourfold place-event in a conjunctive mode is also possible. Derrida organizes much of his "Circumfession" on the basis of these structures. In an important sequence, the front-page of a notebook for the *Book of Elie* constituting a textual and visual representation of the structure is shown.[152] This leads to descriptions of the *escarre*—a regressive version of the structure in which the emphasis falls upon the static aspect of place[153]—and of the *sponge*—another regressive version of the structure in which the emphasis falls upon the dynamic aspect of event.[154] Descriptions of the methods of Jewish exegesis constituting a textual form of the structure,[155] and of Derrida's facial paralysis constituting a visual form of the structure[156] then follow. Several later passages in

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147 Cf. Derrida's first quotation from Augustine in § 1 reads *cur confitemur Deo scienti*? For the topic of divine omniscience cf. *Circum/Circon*. §§ 9, 11, 15, 42.

148 *Circum/Circon*. § 48.

149 *Circum/Circon*. § 32.

150 *CIrcum/Circon*. § 48. Derrida discusses the structure of exemplarity and substitution in several other texts written around the same time. See especially the treatment in the essay "Sauf le nom (Post-Scriptum)." For further discussion see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 88–92.

151 Or what we have termed the "trace-structure." See the discussion on pp. 2–4, 6, 10–12, 17.

152 *Circum/Circon*. § 17.

153 *Circum/Circon*. § 18.

154 *Circum/Circon*. § 20.

155 *Circum/Circon*. § 21.

156 *Circum/Circon*. § 24.

the text can also be associated with this sequence. In one such passage, El Greco's painting *The Burial of Count Orgaz* is described and shown[157]—the visual structure contained there is said to be an anachronism presenting four epochs in one place. In another passage, Derrida's notebook for the *Book of Elie* is described[158]—the visual and textual structure contained there is said to consist of four columns and of four discursive levels. The reader of "Circumfession" will perceive that the macro-structure of these passages is of the same exemplary-substitutive and fourfold type as the micro-structure within each passage.

The relation of prayer to the periods can be clarified on the basis of several passages.[159] In general, Derrida associates prayer with the ethical version of the trace-structure—for example, when he says that writing as such implies asking for pardon for the evil that one has committed[160]—, this trace-structure representing the thread of confession running through "Circumfession" as a whole.[161] Prayer in the strict sense of prayer—i.e. as a non-predicative language of address to the Other—is characterized on the one hand by its direction of address and on the other by its semantic content. The former is indicated when Derrida asks pardon from his mother or from God who are capable of mutual substitution,[162] the latter when he notes that Bennington could not adequately describe to anyone how or why Derrida prays.[163] Prayer in the sense of encomium—i.e. as a mixture of non-predicative language of address to the Other and predicative language of statement about the Other—is sometimes contrasted with prayer in the strict sense. In one passage, Derrida juxtaposes Augustine's prayer which asks specifically why something is the case with his own prayer which

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157 *Circum/Circon*. § 29.

158 *Circum/Circon*. § 51.

159 At *Circum/Circon*. § 49 Derrida describes each period—combining the notions of prayer and circularity—as a "prayer-band" (*bande de prière*).

160 *Circum/Circon*. §§§ 9, 46, 56. This sense of prayer is particularly associated with the notion of "making the truth" discussed earlier. See n. 114.

161 Recent interpreters of "Circumfession" have tended to see confession as the primary motif of "Circumfession"—see the editors' "Introduction: The Postmodern Augustine," *Augustine and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M.J. Scanlon, pp. 1–15—a tendency reinforced by some of Derrida's own comments made in Villanova. However, confession is only one thread within the polysemous fabric of "Circumfession" and—outside the context of committed Christian readership—perhaps not the most provocative one from the philosophical viewpoint.

162 *Circum/Circon*. § 32.

163 *Circum/Circon*. § 36.

does not even know what its words mean.[164] Closely related in linguistic form to prayer is apostrophe. Derrida introduces this at important points in his writing: e.g. after deconstructing the sponge-image in Augustine's *Confessiones* VII. 7. Here he addresses to Bennington the words "Measure the difference."[165]

The relation of multiplication of voices to the periods can be clarified on the basis of other passages.[166] Sometimes there is a multiplication of voices which might be expressed in the form: "Derrida/Augustine." For example, Augustine's instruction to the reader of his confessional writing to take any truth which might seem to be suggested by his words rather than the single truth that was consciously expressed in them is quoted at one point. Derrida sees this as a central feature of his important notion of "making the truth."[167] Elsewhere, he reads Augustine's discussion of the origin of evils, and employs the motif of the sponge to interweave the metaphysical structures implied there—of God's transcendence and immanence and of the soul's return to God—with his own trace-structure. Derrida describes the Augustinian passage as "this sublime chapter."[168] At other times the multiplication of voices might be expressed in the form: "Derrida 1/Derrida 2." The notebooks which had been accumulating in Derrida's attic—containing iconography, learned and naïve notes, dream narratives, philosophical dissertations, and transcriptions on the topic of circumcision[169]—are quoted throughout his text. Other previous works of Derrida are quoted from time to time: for example, *Glas* on the topic of circumcision as interpreted by Hegel and Genet, and also on the use of the two columns, the letters *Gl*, and the figure 7 as a structural selector.[170] Bennington's logocentric *Database*, by contrast, never quotes the actual writings of Derrida.[171]

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164 *Circum/Circon.* § 11. Encomium is not explicitly discussed in "Circumfession" as it was in 'How to Avoid Speaking: Denials'. However, the structure of this concept seems to be present also in the later text.

165 *Circum/Circon.* § 20 *mesure la différence*.

166 Derrida introduces the notion of semantic depth by describing each period as a "secret" at *Circum/Circon.* §§ 47–48 and as a "repetition" (*répétition*) at § 58.

167 *Circum/Circon.* § 44.

168 *Circum/Circon.* §§ 20–21 *ce chapitre sublime*.

169 *Circum/Circon.* §§ 11, 52.

170 *Circum/Circon.* §§ 36 (with illustration) and 52.

171 See *Circum/Circon.* § 5.

Conclusion

Derrida's encounter with Neoplatonism in the specific forms of the structure of Negative Theology and the structure of Conversion provides a good example of his reading of the text of philosophy in general. But how does his encounter with Neoplatonism differ from an immanent reading of that philosophy?

1. One of the main tasks in section *I.* of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" was to explain the distinction between Negative Theology and deconstruction. Derrida here focused particularly on the notion of *hyper-essentiality*—the being *beyond* being of pseudo-Dionysius or the being *without* being of Augustine and Meister Eckhart—and on the notion of *presence* typical of Negative Theology.[172] This distinction was further illuminated by Derrida's discussion of the first component of paradigm *A* of Negative Theology—the notion of the Good as "beyond being" in Plato's *Republic*—in section *II.* of the same essay. Here, attention was drawn to the fact that all other things derive not only their existence but also their being known from the Good.[173] In these passages, Derrida associates Plato—and the Neoplatonists, by implication—with a discoursive practice in which certain privileged negative utterances are held to refer to an "X" which both *is*—albeit in a non-determinate manner—and *causes*. The treatment of this "X" reflects the preoccupation with "onto-theology" or "metaphysics of presence" which Heidegger's hermeneutic of being and time had identified as symptomatic of western philosophy since the end of antiquity. Now, one must concede that Derrida's historical interpretation is accurate at least in its main tendency. Despite the attempts to deprive it of any determinative or indeed meaningful sense of "being" through negation which are so well known, the *X* which is the object of the Negative Theologians' philosophical quest invariably remains a *cause* of some kind although not necessarily a *cause* in some specific Aristotelian sense. This is true of the entire tradition from Plotinus to Nicholas of Cusa, and beyond. No belief in ultimate monism, whether Christian or non-Christian, is possible without it.[174]

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[172] *HTAS*, pp. 77–81/*CNPP*, pp. 540–544.

[173] *HTAS*, p. 102/*CNPP*, pp. 564–565.

[174] The arguments of Jean-Luc Marion (for example in his essay "In the Name. How to Avoid Speaking of Negative Theology'") against Derrida's position on this question are skilful but not really convincing. For some comments on this question see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. ix–xii.

2. In the introductory section of the present essay, we noted the pervasive occurrence in both Neoplatonism and Derrida of a fundamental dialectical-emanative structure—the "trace-structure" or the "fourfold structure"—based on some configuration of positive, combined, negative, and neutral terms. In our main discussions of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" and "Circumfession," several explicit references to this fundamental structure—for example, in the sequence connecting the *escarre* to the facial paralysis, and in the descriptions or graphic depictions of the *The Burial of Count Orgaz* and the notebooks for the *Book of Elie*—as well as numerous implicit references—for example, in the treatments of the secret and of place, and in the relations between the paradigms *A*, *B*, and *C* of Negative Theology—were identified. Now although Derrida's references to this structure are here connected primarily with his account of the deconstructive trace, it is obvious that he also understands Negative Theology and Conversion with reference to this structure, the difference between these two applications depending on the semantic content and on the selection or order of the four terms. But more precisely, how does he understand this structure?

Derrida's application of the fourfold structure to Negative Theology and to Conversion seems to be a partly conscious and partly unconscious (quasi-) conceptualization. Although he clearly employs it more consciously in his description of Negative Theology and in his enactment of the trace with reference to Negative Theology, but less consciously in his description of Conversion and in his enactment of the trace with reference to Conversion, he actually mentions it more in connection with Conversion.[175] That the quasi-conceptualization of this structure is partly unconscious seems to be indicated by Derrida's reference to his "four-stage *compulsion*" (*compulsion à quatre temps*).[176]

Despite the undeniable intellectual subtlety of Derrida's analyses, certain limitations are readily apparent. In particular, although he seems to have understood the application to Negative Theology and to Conversion of a *static* version of the fourfold structure in which the positive, combined, negative, and neutral terms are based on fixed semantic values, he shows little awareness of the importance of applying to Neoplatonic doctrines a

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[175] Of course, he employs the fourfold structure most consciously in his description of the trace.

[176] *Circum/Circon*. § 25. It corresponds to the "repetition compulsion and destiny neurosis" (*la compulsion de répétition et la névrose de destinée*) of § 58.

dynamic version of that structure in which the various configurations of affirmative and negative semes are based on shifting values. However, the second application is as important as the first and inseparable from it. This is because, when the pairs of semes are logically related to one another as contradictories, the combined term involves a denial of the principle of non-contradiction—a situation which must be remedied by rethinking the dialectic relation between the terms either as a temporal evolution, or as a semantic shift, or as both of these. The result is first, the non-discursive thinking which Neoplatonism applies to the principle of Intellect (*nous, intellectus*) superior to Soul (*psuchē, anima*) or to the process of intellection (*noēsis, intellectio*) superior to reasoning (*dianoia, ratio*) within the Soul; and secondly, the same non-discursive thinking as representing if not the whole of Negative Theology at least Negative Theology in its highest form and if not the whole of Conversion at least Conversion in its final stage. There are many indications that Derrida does not understand how this dynamic version of the fourfold structure functions within Neoplatonic doctrine. One particularly striking indication is his mistaken idea that Negative Theology differs from the trace in depending on utterances in propositional form and in balancing affirmative and negative utterances—two features implying the static conception[177]—, whereas in reality both Negative Theology and the trace can frequently elude the propositional form of statement and the symmetry of affirmative and negative predication.

In conclusion, we can say that Derrida's application of the fourfold structure to Negative Theology and to Conversion—the two main forms of his so-called "compulsion"—is more successful in the former than in the latter case. Negative Theology, although dynamically dialectical on a deeper level, does possess a superficial formalism. The developed notion of Conversion, on the other hand, cannot fail to be dynamic. From his public statement a few years after "Circumfession" to the effect that Conversion is a very enigmatic concept whose history remains to be written we can perhaps surmise that he was aware of this situation.[178]

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[177] See our discussion above on pp. 8–9.

[178] See Jacques Derrida, "Confessions and 'Circumfession.' A Roundtable Discussion with Jacques Derrida," p. 46.

CHAPTER TWO

DERRIDA'S PARADIGMS OF NEGATIVE THEOLOGY

2.1. BRIDGING THE GAP

Proclus

As we have seen, Derrida's essay "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" is divided into two main parts. In the first part of the text, the author undertakes a general discussion of "negative theology"—a topic which he had addressed obliquely for many years but never examined in a thorough and continuous way. This general discussion sets out to explain the fundamental differences between negative theology and deconstruction, and especially the determination of Being primarily by the temporal dimension of presence assumed by the former but rejected by the latter. In the second part of his text, Derrida explains that the issue of negative theology needs to be approached through the study of individual cases rather than the formulation of general theories. He therefore embarks on the study of what he terms three "paradigms" of negative theology: *A*. Plato's notions of the Good and *Khōra*, *B*. The Christian theology of Dionysius the Areopagite and Meister Eckhart, and *C*. Heidegger's notions of Being and Nothing.[1]

In order to formulate *Paradigm A* of negative theology, the author arranges several passages in Plato which he has frequently discussed in the past under the headings of "two movements or tropics of negativity" (*deux mouvements ... tropiques de la négativité*) or "two radically heterogeneous structures" (*deux structures ... radicalement hétérogènes*). The first movement includes Plato's discussion of the principle *epekeina tēs ousias* ("beyond being") of the *Republic* and the second his remarks in the *Timaeus* concerning the principle of *Khōra* ("place"),[2] and Derrida is drawing attention to the fact that the Form of the Good and the Receptacle are characterized by negativity or otherness both in themselves and in relation to one

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[1] Part of this argument has been summarized by Leo Sweeney, "Deconstruction and Neoplatonism. Jacques Derrida and Dionysius the Areopagite," in *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*, ed. R. Baine Harris, vol. II (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 93–123. Reading the text in terms of R. Gasché's analysis of deconstruction, Sweeney places the Derridean and Neoplatonic approaches to the Ineffable in general confrontation with one another but does not develop an engagement between them on points of detail.

[2] Derrida marks the beginnings of these two sections of his discussion formally with the Arabic numerals *1* and *2*.

another. A prominent feature of *Paradigm A* will be the simultaneous inversion and non-inversion of an asymmetrical contradiction in a deconstructive process, the asymmetrical contradiction in this case being the axiological priority of the Form of the Good's negativity above Being over *Khōra*'s negativity below Being.

But Derrida's discussion of the *Republic* passage itself,[3] unlike that of the *Timaeus* passages to be treated later, does not immediately involve deconstruction. It begins with what one might termed the "predicative" aspects of Plato's account of the Form of the Good[4] in which both the negativity and the continuity associated with its transcending relation to subsequent terms are shown to be consistent with the so-called "metaphysics of presence."[5] According to Derrida, this negative form "is not neutral … it does not oscillate between the 'neither-this' and the 'nor-that' … it first of all obeys the logic of the 'above'" (*n'est pas neutre … elle n'oscille pas entre le* ni ceci-ni cela *… elle obéit d'abord à une logique du* sur).[6] Moreover, despite the discontinuity that use of the term *epekeina* initially seems to imply, the continuity between that which is beyond Being and the Being of beings is actually reinforced. Such continuity is implied first, by the homologous relation between the two terms[7]—apparently, the fact that there is for Plato a similarity between the Good's relation to the intelligible Forms and the sun's relation to visible objects. It is implied secondly, by the causal dependence of the one on the other[8]—apparently, the fact that the visible sun is described by Plato metaphorically as the offspring of the Form of the Good.[9] According to Derrida again, "negative discourse on that which stands

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[3] Plato, *Republic* 509B.

[4] The beginning of this sub-section is marked by the phrase "on the one hand …" (*d'une part …*).

[5] For the connection between "being" (*essence*) and "presence" (*présence*) that governs this idea see Jacques Derrida, *How To Avoid Speaking: Denials*, p. 101 /*Comment ne pas parler: dénégations*, p. 563. The connection between predication and presence is implicit at this point, but will be rendered explicit in a subsequent paragraph. See note 26.

[6] Derrida, *HTAS*, pp. 101–102/*CNPP*, p. 564. The crucial notions here are the references to *oscillation* and *logic*.

[7] "A sufficiently homogeneous, homologous, or analogous relation" (*un rapport assez homogène, homologue ou analogue*).

[8] "In order that what is … may *owe* its being … to this Good" (*pour que ce qui est …* doive *à ce Bien son être …*).

[9] See *HTAS*, p. 102/*CNPP*, pp. 564–565. Derrida's account of the Platonic doctrine regarding the Good, here as elsewhere, contains definite Heideggerian resonances. These are especially *a*. the suggestion that the Good might be beyond "Being, the Being of beings, or beingness" (*l'être … l'être de l'étant … l'étantité*); *b*. the notion of transcendence as a "movement

beyond Being, and apparently no longer tolerates ontological predicates, does not interrupt this analogical continuity" (*le discours négatif sur ce qui ce tient au-delà de l'être et apparemment ne supporte plus les prédicats ontologiques n'interrompt pas cette continuité analogique*).[10]

The discussion of the *Republic* passage continues by turning to certain "non-predicative" aspects of Plato's account of the Form of the Good.[11] Derrida notes that the speaker in the dialogue named Glaucon addresses himself to the god represented by the sun previously compared to the Good with the words: "O Apollo, what divine hyperbole (*daimonias huperbolēs*: what demonic or supernatural excess)!" (*O Apollon, quelle hyperbole divine* (daimonias huperbolēs: *quel excès démonique ou surnaturel*)!).[12] He adds that the address to God at this point represents a merely humorous exclamation. Our attention is drawn to it now only because it adumbrates the practice, in the Christian negative theology to be discussed under the heading of *Paradigm B*, of *beginning* such a discourse with the invocation of a deity. In the latter case, the address to God will have all the seriousness of prayer.

The transition between Derrida's discussions of the first and second movements or tropics of negativity is achieved through a comment that just as light in the *Republic* passage is described as a "third kind" in addition to the Good and the sun, so is place in the *Timaeus* passages characterized as a third kind in addition to the intelligible and the sensible Forms.[13] That this notion of *third*-ness itself introduces a connotation of the metaphysics of presence into Plato's discussions of both the Form of the Good and the principle of *Khōra* is shown, according to Derrida, by Plato's argument in the *Sophist* that the pairs of opposite Forms or Kinds studied in dialectic are always accompanied by a *third* term constituted by the "is" of predication.[14] The facts that these three Platonic dialogues all discuss the problem of opposites and mediation from a similar angle, and that the relation between the *Republic*'s argument about the Good and the *Timaeus*' argument about

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to the beyond" (*mouvement en* hyper). On Heidegger and transcendence see chapter 2.4, notes 40 and 44; on Heidegger and Being see chapter 2.4, pp. 154–155 and 162–163.

[10] *HTAS*, p. 102/*CNPP*, p. 565. The crucial notion here is the reference to *ontological predicates*.

[11] The beginning of this sub-section is marked by the phrase "on the other hand" (*d'autre part* …).

[12] *HTAS*, p. 103/*CNPP*, p. 565.

[13] *HTAS*, pp. 102–103/*CNPP*, pp. 564–565 *triton genos*.

[14] *HTAS*, p. 103/*CNPP*, p. 565 *triton para ta duo ekeina* (Plato, *Sophist* 243E—cf. *Soph*. 256B and 259C).

Khōra is mediated by the *Sophist*'s argument about the Greatest Kinds also underline the notion of continuity mentioned earlier.[15]

Derrida's discussion of the *Timaeus* passages,[16] unlike that of the *Republic* passage treated earlier, involves an element of deconstruction. It begins with what might again be termed the "predicative" aspects of Plato's account of *Khōra*,[17] although a subtle shift in the conceptual basis of the argument is now discernible. Of particular importance is the fact that the "disproportion and heterogeneity" (*disproportion … hétérogénéité*) of *Khōra*—the fact that Plato assigns to *Khōra* a "being already there" (*être déjà* là) with respect to Demiurgic production, without a common measure with either the eternity of the Forms or the becoming of sensible things, making it "the there itself" (*le 'là' lui-même*) of that production—is connected with Plato's utilization of "two concurrent languages" (*deux langages concurrents*) at this point.[18] Insertion of the qualifying phrase "it seems to me" (*me semble-t-il*) shows that Derrida is now beginning to intervene actively in the presentation of Plato's argument.[19]

What are the two concurrent languages identified here? The first is a language in which the Greek writer elaborates *Khōra* in terms of the metaphysics of presence and the structures of continuity.[20] Here, *Khōra* is said *a*. to participate in the intelligible, *b*. to have a *neither … nor* with respect to the intelligible and the sensible that can be converted into a *both … and*, *c*. to be associated with a multiplication of figures such as "mother," "receptacle," and "sieve," and *d*. to be the anachronistic pre-figuration of the Cartesian space as *extensio* and the Kantian space as pure sensible form. The second language is one in which the Greek author deflects *Khōra* from the metaphysics of presence and the structures of classical ontology.[21] Here, *Khōra* can be seen *a*. as being incapable of entering into a participatory schema, *b*.

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[15] Obviously a further sense of inter-textual mediation is also being introduced by Derrida at this point.

[16] Plato, *Timaeus* 48E, 49AB, 50B–D, 52AB.

[17] The division between this section *2* and the previous section *1* is further emphasized by the sentence: "I will distinguish the tropics of negativity … from another tropics in Plato's works" (*De cette tropique de la négativité … je distinguerai, toujours chez Platon, une autre tropique*).

[18] *HTAS*, pp. 103–104/*CNPP*, p. 566.

[19] There is a more detailed account of *Khōra* in Derrida's later essay *Khōra*, (Paris: Galilée, 1993). For an analysis of this text see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida, Parallelograms*, pp. 125–139.

[20] *HTAS*, pp. 104–105/ *CNPP*, pp. 566–567.

[21] *HTAS*, pp. 105–106/*CNPP*, pp. 567–568.

as having a *neither … nor* which can no longer be converted into a *both … and*, *c*. as transcending the opposition between figurative and proper meaning, and *d*. as anachronistically indifferent to the Cartesian intelligible extension or the Kantian receptive subject. The two languages are concurrent in Plato's text because *Khōra* is "the pre-temporal 'already' that gives place to every inscription" (*le* déjà *pré-temporel qui donne lieu à toute inscription*)—in other words its quasi-temporal and quasi-spatial character is inherently linguistic or hermeneutic—and because *Khōra* therefore permits two readings of the *Timaeus* that are in principle equally viable.[22] However, Derrida admits that it is the second language employed by Plato that interests him more.

The discussion of the *Timaeus* passages continues by turning to certain "non-predicative" aspects of *Khōra*.[23] Here, Derrida takes his starting-point from the "singularity … uniqueness" (*singularité … une …*) of that which, nevertheless, represents a "pure multiplicity of places" (*pure multiplicité de lieux*),[24] and from the fact that it is identity of an address to *Khōra* rather than of a statement about *Khōra* which Plato himself enjoins with the words: *tauton autēn aei prosrēteon*.[25] Of particular importance is the sudden introduction of the idea of singularity at this point. This has occurred because Derrida is combining the notion of a "performative" as a linguistic act that establishes its own referent—and is therefore semantically singular—with the notion of an address as a linguistic form that is non-predicative. In considering *Paradigm B* of negative theology, we will discover that the prototypical instance of such a combination is deconstructive prayer.

The discussion of *Paradigm A* of negative theology is—if we may now be permitted to summarize it in the light of Derrida's general philosophical approach—both a description and a deconstruction of Plato's doctrine. The description is based on parts of the *Republic* and *Timaeus*, and focuses

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[22] It is because of this radically deconstructive aspect of *Khōra* that Derrida sees it as more primordial than Heidegger's notion of the *es gibt* which is too similar to the Christian notion of God's dispensation. On the Heideggerian framework of much of Derrida's discussion of Plato see note 9.

[23] *HTAS*, p. 107/*CNPP*, p. 569. The beginning of this sub-section is marked—recalling the title of the entire essay—by the phrase: "How to speak of it? How to avoid speaking of it?" (*Comment en parler? Comment ne pas en parler?*).

[24] Derrida had earlier referred to the Form of the Good as a "singular limit" (*limite singulière*). See *HTAS*, p. 101/ *CNPP*, p. 564.

[25] Derrida translates this phrase as "one must address oneself to it always in the same manner (*il faut l'appeler toujours de la même façon*)" rather than as "one must always address it under the same name."

on a doctrine of principles according to which the negativity above being of the Form of the Good and the negativity below Being of *Khōra* are—albeit to different degrees—both understood in terms of the metaphysics of presence and the language of predication, especially as reflected in the handling of mediation, continuity, and causality.[26] The deconstruction has two modalities. On the one hand, it involves an interpretation of Plato's doctrine in which the dissimilarities between the Form of the Good and *Khōra*—resulting from the upholding *and* subversion of the priority of presence over other temporal dimensions and the upholding *and* subversion of the priority of predicative over non-predicative language in the case of *Khōra* only[27]—lead to an inversion in the normal axiological priority of the Form of the Good over *Khōra*[28] given that assumptions regarding the primacy of the temporal dimension of presence and of the primacy of predicative language are characteristic of the metaphysical tradition of western thought that requires deconstruction. On the other hand, the deconstruction involves a demonstration of the fact that Plato's own argumentation concerning *Khōra*, by combining a discourse which subverts the metaphysics of presence and the language of predication and also diminishes the importance of mediation, continuity, and causality with the discourse that upholds all these assumptions, embodies within itself significant aspects of the deconstruction here set in motion by the modern interpreter of his text.

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[26] Derrida's discussion of Plato in terms of the metaphysics of presence and the language of predication is, of course, heavily dependent on Heidegger's construction of the history of western philosophy and especially on his view of the development of Greek philosophy stated perhaps first in Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), intro. II, § 6, p. 47. Later, Heidegger argues *i* that being seems initially to be totally indeterminate although, through the analysis of four disjunctions emerging during the history of western metaphysics—becoming / permanence, appearance / the always identical, thought / the already there, and the ought / the given, it can be shown to have the definite meaning of "constant presence" (*ständige Answesenheit*) (*An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 202); *ii* that although the original Greek experience of truth was as "un-concealment"—as revealed by the etymological analysis of *alētheia* as *a* (privative "un") + *lēthē* ("forgetfulness") or *lanthanein* ("to be concealed (from)")—truth became connected primarily with predication and propositions from the time of Plato and Aristotle onwards (*The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and* Theaetetus, trans. T. Sadler (London-New York: Continuum, 2002), §§ 2, pp. 7–9; 16, pp. 85–87; 18, pp. 102–103). Later in this chapter we will cite some instructive examples of Heidegger's treatment of the metaphysics of presence and the language of predication in his discussion of gods. See p. 67 ff.

[27] This movement of discourse being accompanied by a certain weakening of the emphasis on mediation, continuity, and causality.

[28] The Form of the Good and *Khōra* are here treated as typical "asymmetrical contradictories" with which deconstruction can perform its operation. See pp. 31–32.

In outlining his first paradigm, Derrida states that he will content himself with a few "schematic traits" (*traits schématiques*) relevant to the specific question: How to avoid speaking of negative theology? or—as he is now beginning to define it—the more general question of the place of writing, inscription, or trace.[29] He adds that a satisfactory reading of negative theology would require the use of long quotations and recourse to secondary literature—something which he himself is undertaking in other seminars or work in progress—and further indicates some of the inter-textual connections that should be taken into account in elaborating such a project. These inter-textual connections are said to include Thomas Aquinas' debate with pseudo-Dionysius over the relative status of the Good and Being.[30]

But the most significant interlocutor in any debate between Plato, Dionysius, and Aquinas about negative theology would probably be Proclus: a writer of whom Derrida here avoids speaking.[31] In order to further the debate, it will therefore be useful to consider how in the work of this later Platonist on the one hand, the priorities of temporal presence and of predicative language are upheld and intensified through the elaboration of structures of mediation, continuity, and analogy and on the other, the priorities of temporal presence and of predicative language are weakened and subverted through the coincidence of certain terms occupying the position of the Form of the Good and certain terms occupying that of *Khōra*,[32] the aspect of upholding having a definite predominance over the aspect of subverting.

Given the obvious Heideggerian background, our discussion of these questions should perhaps be prefaced by the establishment of certain methodological criteria in the light of recent scholarly debates. In fact, an extensive scholarly literature has now established a historical-philosophical distinction with respect to Neoplatonism between "henology" and "ontology" and criticized Heidegger for failing to take account of it.[33] According to

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[29] *HTAS*, p. 101/*CNPP*, p. 563.

[30] *HTAS*, p. 102/*CNPP*, p. 564.

[31] The history of the literary-philosophical relationship between these authors is too vast a topic to discuss here. We would simply draw attention to the facts that Aquinas wrote important commentaries on Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus* and on the "Liber de Causis" both of which are based on Proclus' teachings, and that the same "angelic doctor" derived much of his knowledge of Plato and Platonism from these writings.

[32] Somewhat retrospectively, we will find further justification for reading Derrida in juxtaposition with Proclus in some remarks by Derrida concerning Heidegger's "theology" made in connection with the discussion of *Paradigm C* of negative theology. See pp. 67–68.

[33] The foundational modern study of this question—which also seems to have established the term "henology"—is Pierre Aubenque, "Plotin et le dépassement de l'ontiologie

this line of argument, Heidegger's interpretation of the western metaphysical tradition applies to the latter's ontology but not to its henology, this tradition as a whole being characterized by the forgetfulness of the "ontological distinction" between Being and beings and the development of an "onto-theology" in which—given the general assumption of an interpretative horizon of temporality—beings *as* beings are determined exclusively by the temporal dimension of the present. The same scholarly literature has further argued that, since Heidegger does not take account of the distinction between henology and ontology typical of Neoplatonism, his entire historical understanding of western metaphysics is flawed. Now among arguments to the effect that Heidegger's notions of the forgetfulness of Being and of the onto-theological nature of metaphysics do not apply to henology, perhaps the most popular is based on the identification of *einai*—the present infinitive of the verb "to be"—with the Neoplatonic One that occurs in the Porphyrian *Commentarius in Parmenidem*.[34] The frequent use of this argument

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grecque classique," in *Le néoplatonisme* (*Royaumont, 9–13 juin 1969*), (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971), pp. 101–109. Aubenque shows that Plotinus makes three kinds of arguments for the priority of the One over Being: *1*. logical: It is the One that makes beings beings, *2*. epistemological: Intellect can only think itself by transcending itself, and *3*. metaphysical: Being when reduced to the specific sense of permanence cannot be the cause of all things (pp. 102–103). He further shows that *3* emerges only implicitly through the combination of *1* and 2 but includes a reference to the onto-theological sense of metaphysics identified by Heidegger. However, the One clearly transcends this notion of Being: "Plotin est sans aucun doute par là le premier philosophe grec qui ramène à sa vraie place, la seconde, une ontologie qui, pour répondre à la question de l'être de l'étant, se contentait d'exhibiter un étant particulier, quoique privilégié: le Permanent, le Toujours étant, dont la figure la plus haute était le Divin" (p. 104). Aubenque further argues that the idea of transcending Being in Heidegger's onto-theological sense is prepared in certain passages of Aristotle and in the Stoic distinction of *ti* ("something") and *on* ("a being") (pp. 104–105). Plotinus fails to develop the Stoic insight in *Enneads* VI. 1-VI. 2 because of its materialist context (105–107). However, Plotinus and Porphyry initiate a movement away from permanent being as the only type of being by suggesting that the One is *mē einai* ("non-being") or is *einai* ("the 'to be'") respectively. These approaches concur "en réaction contre l'onto-théologie" in maintaining "que l'être de l'étant n'est pas un étant" (107–108). Despite the original and insightful nature of this essay, it seriously distorts Heidegger's position by reducing the broader notion of the forgetfulness of the ontological difference between Being and beings to the specific epochal configuration of onto-theology, since what may be true of the latter may not be equally true of the former. However, more importantly it fails to apply what we will call, in the next paragraph of the present chapter, the criteria of *predominance* and *omission*.

[34] Our understanding of the origins, nature, and influence of this doctrine owes an enormous debt to a series of studies by Pierre Hadot, beginning with "La distinction de l'être et de l'étant dans le 'De Hebdomadibus' de Boèce," in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 2 (1963), pp. 147–153, and continuing with *Porphyre et Victorinus*, (Paris: Études augustinennes, 1968), "*Forma essendi*. Interprétation philologique et interprétation philosophique d'une formule

by scholars seems to have resulted from the apparent parallelism between the pair of terms *einai* ("being") and *ousia* ("substance") in the ancient Platonist's Greek not only with the pair of terms *Sein* ("Being") and *das Seiende* ("beings") in Heidegger's German but also with the further pair *esse* ("existence") and *essentia* ("essence") in the Latin of Thomas Aquinas, the historical derivation being no less demonstrable than the semantic shifting between these pairs of terms.[35] However, there would have been a more convincing argument to the effect that Heidegger's notions of the forgetfulness of Being and of the onto-theological nature of metaphysics do not apply to henology, if the same commentator on the *Parmenides* had identified with the Neoplatonic One the first person singular of the future indicative of the verb "to be" or at least the *future* infinitive.

Without suggesting that Heidegger's historical-philosophical interpretations are faultless—indeed, there is certainly much to correct in his discussions of western metaphysics and especially those of western Neoplatonism[36]—we would like to define two criteria for interpreting Neoplatonic texts with any intention of refuting Heidegger's reading thereof. First, there is the criterion of *predominance*. Here, one should ask: What is the predominant tendency in the Neoplatonist's articulation of a particular doctrine or position? Application of such a criterion would show, for example, that there is a constant emphasis upon the One's *causality*—and therefore much evidence of the forgetfulness of the ontological difference mentioned by Heidegger—and that an occasional reference to the One's *non*-causality is insufficient to counteract the idea of its causality. Second, there is the criterion of *omission*. Here, one should ask: What are the unstated assumptions

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de Boèce," in *Les études classiques* 38 (1970), pp. 143–156, and "L'être et l'étant dans le néoplatonisme," in *Études néoplatoniciennes*, (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1973), pp. 27–39.

[35] Under the inspiration of Aubenque, the same argument has been made by among others Reiner Schürmann, "L'hénologie comme dépassement de la métaphysique," in *Les études philosophiques* 86 (1982), p. 334 and Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie et* Ereignis, pp. 65–70. (Despite agreement on this point, Narbonne has rightly criticized many aspects of Schürmann's article in *"Henôsis* et *Ereignis*. Remarques sur une interprétation heideggérienne de l'Un plotinien," *Les études philosophiques* 1999, pp. 105–121).

[36] One cannot deny many of the points raised by Wayne J. Hankey, "Why Heidegger's 'History' of Metaphysics is Dead," in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (2004), pp. 425–443 in his thorough review of the contemporary debate, although the present author would obviously subscribes to a more "vampirical" assessment of the current and future *fortuna* of Heidegger's historical interpretation. On the over-simplifying view of the scholastic tradition found in Heidegger's writings see Jean-Luc Marion, "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-théo-logie," *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995), pp. 31–61 and Olivier Boulnois, "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot," ibid., pp. 85–108.

in the Neoplatonist's articulation of a specific doctrine ore position? Application of this criterion would show, for instance, that there are no references to the *present* of the One—and therefore little evidence of the forgetfulness of the ontological difference mentioned by Heidegger—but also that there are no references to the One's *futurity* sufficient to counteract the idea of its *present*.

The relation between Neoplatonic metaphysics and Heidegger's thinking might therefore be specified in a preliminary way as follows. With application of the criterion of predominance, we can say that Neoplatonism takes its starting-point from the notion of *unity* as represented by the One or the Good, whereas Heidegger sets out from the assumption of a *one-fold*—characterized as Being, "the sway of Be-ing" (*das Wesen des Seyns*), or Enowning—in which unity is identified with duality or unity is equivalent to its relation to duality.[37] The Neoplatonic system and the Heideggerian *anti*-system then unfold in repetition or oblivion of the ontological difference respectively. In terms of the criterion of predominance, Neoplatonism can also be understood as postulating a series of levels of *reality*, linked by a *causality* exhibiting a stable relation between cause and effect, and Heidegger as enacting a series of phases of *interpretation*, linked by *grounding* which is simultaneously de-stabilized as "un-ground" (*Un-Grund*). In terms of the criterion of omission, Neoplatonism can be seen as implicitly depending on the stability of a *logical* model consisting of inherently *non-historical*

[37] For a good account of the Neoplatonic doctrine of the One that, while displaying sensitivity to the issues raised by Heidegger, avoids confusion of Plotinian and Heideggerian modes of thought, see Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie, et* Ereignis, première partie, pp. 21–186. Narbonne argues persuasively that the Neoplatonic system is ultimately a kind of "syntaxe de l'ineffable" (p. 157) that attempts to combine two fundamental intuitions: namely, that there is a unique first principle beyond all things that is ineffable, and that this principle establishes the rule according to which the subsequent reality is ordered (pp. 158–159), this combination of intuitions leading to a variety of problems not solved by the Neoplatonists themselves (pp. 157–163). With respect to Plotinus (whose approach is not radically altered at this point by later thinkers), the One maintains a kind of reality in that it "subsists" (*huparchein*) (pp. 29–31), is a "principle" (*archē*) (pp. 31–32), and also "the 'to be'" (*einai*) (pp. 31–32). Reflecting certain analogous ideas in the earlier Stoicism, the One's primary function is to exercise a causal and cohesive force throughout reality (pp. 81–82). Although the One is neither "something" (*to ti*) nor "a being as" (*to hoion*) (pp. 89–92, 99), Plotinus—in order to reject any suggestion that the One might be nothing at all—insists that the One is a "reality / thing" (*pragma*) and even a "substratum" (*hupokeimenon*) (94–95). Therefore, one may conclude that Plotinus' discourse about the One "devait se tenir constamment en équilibre," being forced to avoid its assimilation on one side to "l'étant déterminé," on another to "l'Être pur et simple," and on yet another to "le *nihil*." (p. 102). As we will see later in the present volume, Damascius will attempt to capture this equilibrium systematically in his notion of "the Ineffable" (*to aporrhēton*).

structures, and Heidegger as exploiting the combination of stability and instability in a *hermeneutic* model articulated through the *historical* epochs of "Being's destiny" (*Geschick des Seins*). With application of the criterion of omission, we can say that Neoplatonism implicitly assumes the temporal dimension of the *present* in the sense of the transcendence of time by eternity as its point of departure, whereas Heidegger explicitly treats the temporal "ecstasy" (*Ekstase*) of the *future*—specified as that which is not a moment of presence occurring in the future and that whose futurity can never become such a moment of presence—as the primary orientation of *Da-sein's* temporality.[38]

Now the priority of temporal presence in the specific case of Proclus can be demonstrated quite easily in connection with his discussion of time.[39] In commenting on the lemma 37d 3–7 of Plato's *Timaeus* in which time is said to be the image of eternity, the later Platonist argues that eternity is "present to itself all at once" (*homou parousa hautōi*),[40] that it "is present"

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[38] For a good example of the confusion of Plotinian and Heideggerian modes of thought, albeit not without moments of genuine insight, see Schürmann, "L'hénologie comme dépassement de la métaphysique," pp. 331–350. Schürmann begins by attempting to locate two versions of a "différence ontologique" in Plotinus: namely, a physical-metaphysical difference and a phenomenological-henological difference (pp. 334–335) and, although the first version can easily be shown as Plotinian, no argument—beyond the mere assertion of the One's "caractère événementiel"—is produced for the latter. Moreover, Schürmann fails to show even in passing that a transition from the question regarding the nature of beings to the question regarding the meaning of Being (i.e.from the logical and metaphysical to the phenomenological and hermeneutic) can be found anywhere in the *Enneads*. The first main part of this essay sets out to prove that, because the One appears in a threefold manner as *a*. the "maker" (*facteur*) of unification (pp. 337–338), as *b*. a function of the verb "to be" rather than a supreme being named by the substantive "being" (pp. 334, 336), and as *c*. the "directionality" (*sens*) of phenomena (p. 338), the One can be described as a (Heideggerian) *Ereignis*. Now although points *a*.and *c*. do reflect certain shared intentions on the part of Plotinus and Heidegger—thanks to the gathering function of the Stoic *logos* that originally inspired Plotinus in the former case, and the directional polarity of procession and reversion in the latter—, the use of *einai* alluded to in point *b*. has neither the temporal nor the hermeneutic features that would permit its alignment with the *Ereignis*. The second main part of the essay in which Schürmann attempts to argue that the One corresponds to a "temps originaire" on the grounds that *Enn*. III. 7 suggests a structural analogy between the One / Intellect / Soul and an "X" / Eternity, Time, and that originary time must correspond to this "X" (p. 339 ff.) is even less convincing. This structural analogy as a whole is mere guesswork and there are absolutely no references in Plotinus' text to such a "time." In fact, the argument only makes sense if one accepts the equation of Plotinian One and Heideggerian *Ereignis* posited in the first part of the essay.

[39] The priority of predicative language will be illustrated at length on p. 61 ff.

[40] *Commentarius in Timaeum*, ed. E. Diehl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1906) III, 8. 2–3. It should be noted that the priority of temporal presence in Proclus is based on the status of

(*paresti, pareinai*) to temporal things,[41] and that the world receives its indivisible "presence" (*parousia*),[42] this dependence of time on eternity being consistent with the fact that time is not simply a phantasm subsisting only in things being numbered[43] but is both an "intellect" (*nous*)[44] and a "god" (*theos*),[45] is as much "stable" (*menein*) as it is dynamic,[46] and in originating the world through soul parallels the Demiurge's origination of the latter through intellect.[47] It is interesting to note that a later member of the same philosophical school, who deemed it necessary to challenge the prevalence of mediating and analogical structures in Proclus' metaphysical doctrine by introducing a more radical discontinuity into the system of first principles, paid special attention to the revision of Proclus' doctrine of time.[48]

Proclus' doctrine has always been famous on account of its structural complexity and its systematic presentation, these two features alone making it almost a caricature of Heidegger's interpretation of traditional metaphysics. Given that for Proclus, the teaching regarding the gods lays the foun-

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"eternity" (*aiōn*) and not on that of "being" (*on*). This is indicated by his argument following his teacher Syrianus and against Strato the physicist at *CTim.* III. 15. 8–16. 11 that "eternity is the cause of stability in being" (*ho de aiōn tēs en tōi einai diamonēs*).

[41] *CTim.* III, 16. 33–17. 1. Cf. *CTim.* III, 17. 5 and III. 17. 10.

[42] *CTim.* III. 17. 12–13. It is notable that the traditional Platonic notion of *parousia* shares with Heidegger's notion of *Anwesenheit* a certain ambiguity with respect to temporal and spatial reference, this ambiguity playing an important part in the development of Heidegger's interpretation of western philosophy as a "metaphysics of presence."

[43] *CTim.* III. 27. 13–15. Proclus goes on immediately to contrast his own view of time with the Aristotelian notion alluded to here in several other ways.

[44] *CTim.* III. 27. 3–4 "a proceeding intellect" (*nous … proïōn*); III. 27. 24–25 an "intellectual nature" (*noera … phusis*).

[45] *CTim.* III. 27. 9 and III. 28. 10–11.

[46] *CTim.* III. 27. 32-III. 28. 29. An etymology *chronos* ("time") = *choreuōn nous* ("dancing intellect") is exploited in order to suggest this dynamic aspect.

[47] *CTim.* III. 28. 7–11. The priority of temporal presence is weakened perhaps by only one argument in Proclus. This occurs at *CTim.* III, 38. 12–27 where he quotes his teacher Syrianus' doctrine that the "it was" (*to 'ēn'*) and the "it will be" (*to 'estai'*) which arise with the world are not "parts" (*moria*) of time—like months and years—but "forms" (*eidē*) of time. In order to grasp the fullness and majesty of time, one must rather understand the "it was" as indicating the "completing" (*telesiourgos*), the "it will be" the "revelatory" (*ekphantorikē*), and the "it is" the "connective" (*sunektikē*) aspects of the "series of time" (*hē chronou taxis*). This doctrine of Syrianus is obviously important for moving away from the notion of time as divided into three quasi-spatial compartments, and of the present as quasi-spatially demarcated from the past and the future. Proclus' concluding observation that time according to its third aspect "connects that which is present" (*sunechei ta paronta*) is also particularly illuminating in establishing a definite linkage between *1.* the present tense, *2.* "the present" (*ta paronta*), and *3.* the notion of *connecting*. On the importance of this linkage see p. 43 ff.

[48] This philosopher was Damascius whose doctrine will be studied in connection with our discussion of Derrida's "Paradigm *C*."

dation of the doctrines concerning the existence of separate non-temporal realities and the participation in those non-temporal realities that are typical of the Platonic worldview, we will concentrate on an analysis of this doctrine in the present instance. More specifically, the gods have the most intimate relation to certain "self-constituted" (*authupostata*) principles.[49] These are principles that are "ungenerated" (*agenēta*) and "indestructible" (*aptharta*),[50] and can be contrasted with everything "measured by time according to substance or activity" (*metroumenon ē kata tēn ousias ē kata tēn energeian*).[51] The gods have an equally intimate relation to the notion of a "self-perfect" (*autotelēs*) principle.[52] Such a principle represents a participated term that is present in "things that participate it always" (*aei metechonta*)[53] and a participated term that is "participated separately" (*chōristōs metechomenon*) by the things in which it is present.[54] It would be difficult to find a greater radicalization of the traditional Platonic doctrine of Forms and particulars from which it ultimately derives. Given that the entire doctrine is stated in the form of a series of propositions, the priorities of temporal presence *and* predicative language are obvious.

However in juxtaposing Proclus with Derrida, it is of limited value to write at length about such obvious distinctions. There is more philosophical value in bringing to the surface of the ancient thinker's writings various conceptual links that remain submerged in the perceptive but cursory description of Platonism represented by *Paradigm A*. The most essential links include the following: *1.* In Proclus, the priority of presence over the other temporal dimensions to which Derrida referred is manifested through the priority of the non-temporal—normally called the eternal—over the temporal as such.[55] This priority of presence is associated with an emphasis upon the role

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[49] See pp. 65–67.

[50] Proclus, *Elementatio Theologica*, ed. E.R. Dodds (2nd ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), props. 45, 46. 12–46, 46. 28.

[51] *ET*, props. 49, 48. 11–50, 48. 30.

[52] See p. 66.

[53] as opposed to "things that participate it sometimes" (*pote metechonta*). See *ET*, props. 63, 60. 1–64, 62. 12.

[54] as opposed to "participated inseparably" (*achōristōs* metechomenon). See *ET*, props. 81, 76. 12–82, 76. 28.

[55] Although Proclus broadly speaking holds to the traditional Platonic position whereby the non-temporal is distinguished from and elevated above the temporal sphere, he does establish a dynamic continuity between the two spheres by distinguishing various higher levels of "time," this continuity being necessary because of the dynamic view of the non-temporal sphere characteristic of all post-Plotinian thought. On these questions see William O'Neill, "Time and Eternity in Proclus," in *Phronesis* 7 (1962), pp. 161–165, Samuel Sambursky

of mediation probably because the present is seen as something occurring between the past and the future and the mediate as something occurring between the initial and the final.[56] The priority of presence is further associated with an emphasis upon Being because the most common Greek term for the latter in Proclus and other writers: *to on*, is a *present* participle—a point that had already been strongly emphasized by Heidegger. These associations underlie many of ideas to be discussed in the section of this chapter labelled "Proclus on the Gods—Being and Mediation." *2*. In Proclus, the remorselessly logical discourse of propositions and proofs in the *Elementatio Theologica*—epitomizing the priority of predicative language over non-predicative language to which Derrida alluded—is used in order to pursue the systematic investigation of the notions of continuity, similarity, and analogy within the doctrine of causality.[57] The priority of presence over the other dimensions of time associated with an emphasis upon the role of mediation is here substantially reinforced when the specific notion of mediation is expanded into the more general idea of continuity through exploitation of the notions of similarity and analogy.[58] These associations underlie many of the ideas to be discussed in the section of this chapter labeled: "Continuity and Causality in Proclus." *3*. There are in Proclus the beginnings of a certain tendency of thought opposite to that traced above. Here, a peculiar notion of place having many affinities with Derrida's deconstructive interpretation of *Khōra* in Plato's *Timaeus* comes to the fore, although its spatial sense differs

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and Solomon Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism, Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1971), Veronika M. Roth, *Das Ewige Nun. Ein Paradoxon in der Philosophie des Proklos* (Berlin: Druncker u. Humbolt, 2008), Emilie F. Kutash, "Eternal Time and Temporal Expansion: Proclus' Golden Ratio," in P. Vassilopoulou and S.R.L. Clark (eds.), *Late Antique Epistemology. Other Ways of Truth* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009), pp. 44–66.

[56] For this association of ideas see above note 47.

[57] In the discussion to follow, we will emphasize the role of the predicative and the discursive in Proclus' philosophical formulations in accordance with the project of reading Proclus intertextually in relation to Derrida (and Heidegger). However, it will be recalled from the discussion in Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, p. 153 ff. that there is a pronounced *non-predicative* and *non-discursive* aspect of the hypostasis of Intellect in Plotinus and Proclus. These two approaches are not inconsistent with one another, given that a distinction must be maintained between intellectual thinking as such—which may be non-predicative and non-discursive—and the psycho-linguistic expression of that thinking—which is compelled into predicative and discursive form. For some more discussion of non-predicative and non-discursive thought in intellection and theurgy see below p. 54 ff.

[58] For this association of ideas see below note 149.

radically from that of mediation in implying absence rather than presence of measure. These ideas moving in opposition to the main tendency of Proclus' thought will be studied in an interlude between the two main sections of this chapter.

Proclus on the Gods—Being and Mediation

From the exegetical viewpoint, Proclus' theory of first principles is based primarily on Plato's *Parmenides* with some support from the *Philebus*. The first three hypotheses of the second part of the *Parmenides* are broadly associated with the three primal hypostases of post-Plotinian philosophy, and the parallelism between the terms negated in the first hypothesis and those affirmed in the second hypothesis is understood as the basis of a combination of negative theology with respect to the One or Good and of affirmative theology with respect to Being.[59] The most striking features of this interpretation of the *Parmenides* are undoubtedly the identification of logical negation and affirmation with metaphysical transcendence and immanence, and the establishment of a structural analogy between the first two hypostases. According to the resulting doctrine, the One and Being become coordinated with series of ones and beings respectively as both (transcendent) causes and (immanent) members of their respective series.[60] Moreover, the relation between negation and affirmation can signify the relation between the (transcendent) One and its series of ones, between the (transcendent) One and the series of beings, and between a (transcendent) being and its series of beings.[61] Finally, the series of ones has the possibility of being associated more closely with the One, of being associated more closely

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[59] This interpretation of the *Parmenides*—which is actually attributed to Syrianus and contrasted with the interpretations of Plotinus, Iamblichus, and others—is worked out at length in Proclus' *Commentarius in Parmenidem* V–VII but is conveniently summarized at Proclus, *Theologia Platonica*, eds. H.-D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–1996), I. 11, 47. 1–I. 12, 58. 22 and III. 23, 81. 21–83. 18. For an analysis of this interpretation of the *Parmenides* and its relation to the structure of the *Theologia Platonica* see pp. lx–lxxxix of that edition.

[60] This notion of series depends on the doctrine established at least since the time of Plotinus that the hypostases of Intellect and Soul are each a universal (whole) principle containing a multiplicity of particular (partial) principles. For the hypostases interpreted as series see Proclus, *ET*., props. 20, 22. 1–31 and 21, 24. 1–33 (especially the corollary at 24. 22–33). The application of this notion also to the One is obviously more problematic.

[61] We say "can signify" because this depends on the viewpoint adopted by the intellect which is articulating these structures quasi-subjectively.

with Being, or of remaining in the mediate position between the One and Being—a point we must examine in more detail.[62]

There are many passages in which Proclus associates the ones—usually called the "henads" (*henades*) or "gods" (*theoi*)[63]—closely with the One. In one text, he states the principle that the entire divine order is "primordially and supremely simple" (*haploun prōtōs ... kai malista*),[64] and in another that the primal series is "united in nature with the One" (*tōi heni sumphuomenos*).[65] But the most important discussion occurs in the *Commentarius in Parmenidem* where Proclus argues that each henad is "other" (*allon*) but not "other *than*" (*heteron*) the One because otherness would be "second and mediating" (*deutera ... mesē*) between the One and the henad in the latter case. There is indeed a "declination" (*huphesis*) of the henad from the One, but this quasi-otherness is to be distinguished from the otherness subsequent to the henad itself which merits "the title of the reciprocity" (*hē allēlōn prosēgoria*) whereby one term is distinguished from another.[66] The upshot of this explanation of the Platonic *lemma*: "Thus

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[62] The doctrine of henads in Proclus, to which we now turn, gives rise to a number of exegetical problems. In particular, there is an apparent discrepancy between the presentation in the *Theologia Platonica*—where the henads are correlated with items arising in a complex triadic subdivision that organizes the terms affirmed of the One in the second hypothesis of Plato's Parmenides—and in the *Elementatio Theologica*—where the henads constitute a series derived from the monadic One that is structurally analogous with the lower series derived from the monadic Intellect and the monadic Soul. The first presentation forms the basis of Gerd Van Riel, "Les hénades de Proclus sont-elles composées de limite et d'illimité?," in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 85 (2001), pp. 417–432, and the second that of Christian Guérard, "La théorie des hénades et la mystique de Proclus," in *Dionysius* 6 (1982), pp. 73–82, although neither author admits that his own analysis is partial. Of these two analyses, that of Van Riel is less convincing because it establishes (pp. 471–472) a complex system of participations among the henads and beings which has no textual basis in *TP* or elsewhere in Proclus. In fact, the interrelations among the henadic terms are less likely to have followed the "participatory" model of form and particular, as Van Riel suggests, than the "communion" model of the intellectual Kinds. For the latter see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, pp. 141–151. Certain aspects of the henadic doctrine have also been discussed recently by Edward P. Butler in a series of studies: "Polytheism and Individuality in the Henadic Manifold," in *Dionysius* 23 (2005), pp. 83–104, id., "The Gods and Being in Proclus," in *Dionysius* 26 (2008), pp. 93–114, id. "The Intelligible Gods in the Platonic Theology of Proclus," in *Methexis* 21 (2008), pp. 131–143.

[63] These terms are broadly equivalent in Proclus' writing. However, for the trace of a distinction see p. 66 and note 174.

[64] *ET*, prop. 127, 112. 25–26.

[65] *PT* III. 3, 12. 21–23.

[66] Proclus, *Commentarius in Parmenidem*, ed. C. Steel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007–2009) VII, 1190. 4–31.

the One cannot be other than, or the same as, either itself or another." "No indeed" is that a henad is ultimately not other than the One or another henad by the form of otherness that is logically expressible.[67]

When Proclus elsewhere associates the henads closely with Being, the situation becomes more complicated. At first sight, there seems to be a conflict between two principles of his axiomatic theology: *1*. "Every divine henad is participated without mediation by one being, and everything divinized strains upward to one divine henad. Thus, the number of participated henads is identical with the number of kinds of participating beings",[68] and *2*. "Every plurality nearer to the One is lesser in quantity than those further away but greater in power."[69] Although the resolution ultimately lies in Proclus' assumption that the normal logical distinction between unity and plurality does not apply at the level of the henads,[70] this continuing ambiguity concerning the relation between henads and beings underlies the further doctrines *a*. that there are henads participated by each different level of beings—for example, intellects, souls, bodies[71]—, *b*. that the term "god" at least can be applied also to the participatory hypostasis of henad-being,[72] and *c*. that each participation of a henad by a being has a threefold structure of henad, power, and intellect—the last corresponding to the being.[73]

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[67] See Plato, *Parmenides* 139E. At *CParm*. VII, 1190. 25–1191. 7. Proclus goes on to distinguish three kinds of quasi-otherness in the henadic realm: "transcendence" (*huperochē*), "declination" (*huphesis*), and "peculiarity" (*idiotēs*) as corresponding to three kinds of otherness in the lower realm: "of superiors" (*kreittonōn*), "of inferiors" (*cheironōn*), and "of coordinates" (*homostoichōn*), adding that distinctions such as these which explain how "the One" and "the others" are not other than one another at least represent our best attempt at expressing the inexpressible in philosophical language.

[68] *ET*, prop. 135, 120. 1–4 *pasa theia henas huph'henos tinos metechetai tōn ontōn amesōs, kai pan to ektheoumenon eis mian henada anateinetai. kai hosai hai metechomenai henades, tosauta kai ta metechonta genē tōn ontōn*. At *PT* III. 4, 15. 6–15 Proclus states that this principle is necessary for the correct interpretation of Parmenides' dialectic.

[69] *ET*, prop. 62, 58. 22–23 *pan plēthos enguterō tou henos on posōi men esti tōn porrōterō elatton, tēi dunamei de meizon*.

[70] See pp. 46–47 above.

[71] See *ET*, prop. 144, 126. 19–32, *ET*, props. 163, 142. 9–165, 144. 8 and *PT* III. 6, 20. 1–28. 21.

[72] This terminology is here introduced as a convenient way of labelling a concept that Proclus characterizes more obliquely through an interpretation of the "One-Being" of Plato's *Parmenides*. Many examples of the concept can be found in *PT* III. 12, 44. 21-III. 14, 52. 11 and III. 26, 89. 3-III. 27, 99. 23. See also p. 45.

[73] The theory is stated at *PT* I. 17, 80. 14–23 and applied extensively in *PT* III. 21, 73. 9–78. 14. It is mainly based on the *Oracula Chaldaica* although Proclus also finds Platonic authority for it in the *Philebus* and the *Laws*. For further details of Proclus' doctrine of participation between being and henad see *ET*, props. 142, 124. 27–143, 126. 18.

There are many passages in which Proclus associates the henads neither closely with the One nor closely with Being, assigning to them a mediate position.[74] At one point he turns to exegesis of the *Republic* in order to clarify the nature of this intermediate status, identifying the henads with "the divinity proceeding from the first" (*hē apo tou prōtou proïousa theotēs*) of which the light diffused by the sun is the visible analogy.[75] On most occasions, he establishes the same position with a complex exegesis of the *Philebus*.[76] In one chapter, he argues that the principles of "Limit" (*peras*) and "Unlimited" (*apeiria*) which come between the One and Being "are henads derived from the One" (*henades gar eisin apo tou henos hupostasai*),[77] and also that the analysis deriving Being from the henadic Limit and Unlimited is more precise than the one deriving Being from "form and intelligible matter" (*eidos kai hulē noētē*) practised by the school of Plotinus.[78] For present purposes, the most important point to emerge from these two exegeses is that the henads occupy a mediate position between the One and Being to the extent that they embody the relation between limit and unlimited, are dynamic and proceeding, and pre-contain the paradigm of materiality.

The fact that the series of henads has the possibility of being associated more closely with the One, of being associated more clearly with Being, or of remaining in the mediate position between One and Being—an ambiguity which might conveniently be expressed by using the grapheme *henad*(*s*) in this context[79]—is associated in the first instance with a certain exege-

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[74] According to *PT* III. 8, 31. 6–10 it is necessary to posit such an intermediate level in order to maintain "the proper character of the One in its purity" (*hē tou henos idiotēta katharōs*), i.e. its radical transcendence. It is in connection with this mediate position that the further question of the relations among the henads themselves—which we will make no attempt to consider here—should also be examined. On this topic see the discussion of Edward P. Butler, "Polytheism and Individuality in the Henadic Manifold," pp. 86–92.

[75] *PT* III. 4, 16. 15–17. 12.

[76] Plato, *Philebus* 23CD.

[77] *PT* III. 9, 36. 10–16. There is a seeming contradiction between this statement and the axiom *ET*, prop. 159, 138. 30–32 that every order of gods "is derived from the two initial principles of Limit and Unlimited" (*ek tōn prōtōn estin archōn, peratos kai apeirias*). However, Proclus seems to be speaking in the *PT* text of henads abstracted from Being and in the *ET* text of the participatory henads-beings mentioned above.

[78] *PT* III. 9, 39. 15–40. 8. According to *PT* III. 8, 34. 1–11 this analysis is more precise because the Unlimited is more closely associated with "generative" (*gennētikē*) power, matter more closely with "incomplete" (*atelēs*) power.

[79] Of course, Proclus himself does not employ such a device. However, he does argue that the linguistic form of Parmenides' argumentation—hypothetical syllogisms in which a single antecedent is coupled with a plurality of consequents—reflects the ambiguous unity and plurality of the henad (s). See *CParm*. VI, 1049. 28–1051. 25.

sis of the *Parmenides*.[80] Proclus notes that the term "many" which is introduced by Parmenides as the first attribute denied of the One in the first hypothesis corresponds to the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods, whereas the term "one-being" which is introduced as the last attribute denied of the One in the same hypothesis corresponds to the intelligible gods.[81] Given that the intelligible gods are higher in status than the intelligible-and-intellectual gods, and that the attributes of higher principles are also possessed by lower principles but not vice versa, this amounts to a denial of multiplicity with respect to the intelligible gods.[82] Now if the structural relation between the One, Being, and the henad(s) is to be located primarily among these gods, then the ambiguity of this relation which we have noted above becomes perfectly understandable according to these criteria.[83]

A "Deconstructive" Tendency

But Proclus' system also assumes a connection between a certain concept of "place" (*topos*) and the notions of the One, Being, and the mediate, and it is at this point that a tendency somewhat counter to the one we have been studying so far begins to emerge. To be more precise, the upholding and intensifying of the priority of temporal presence through the elaboration

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[80] It is also associated more fundamentally with the fact that, since the first principle is unknowable, the notion of "unity" can only be applied to it in a provisional sense. See the discussion below.

[81] *CParm*. VI. 1089. 14–1092. 12. Cf. *PT* II. 12, 66. 7–17. At *PT* II. 12, 72. 19–73. 23 Proclus explains why Parmenides introduces these attributes in a reversal of the order one might expect.

[82] In other words, our normal concept of multiplicity will not apply to the highest principles—a conclusion explicitly drawn at *CParm*. VI. 1090. 24–1091. 2. In parallel fashion, our normal concept of unity will also not apply to the highest principles—see *PT* I. 20, 94. 17–95. 22.

[83] At *CParm*. VI. 1091. 19–1092. 12 Proclus explains the reasons why Parmenides follows this order of presentation with respect to the gods. The issues raised in this paragraph are among those that motivated Damascius to modify many features of Proclus' doctrine of henads. The later philosopher's most significant innovations involve a rethinking of the relations between the henads and being in such a way that *i*. the three causes of the intelligible order (called the "One-All," the "All-One," and the "Unified") are all considered to be henads whereas in Proclus only the first two causes (called "Limit," and "Infinity") are henads while the third is "Being," and—apparently after a change of thought—*ii*. the distinction between henads and beings as such is conceived as emerging only within the first triad of the intelligible-and-intellectual order. On Damascius' theory of henads and his differences with Proclus see Joseph Combès, "Proclus et Damascius," reprinted in Joseph Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes*, 1st. ed. (Grenoble: Millon, 1989), pp. 253–260.

of structures of mediation is mitigated by a weakening and subversion of that same priority through the coincidence of certain terms occupying the position of the Form of the Good with certain terms occupying that of *Khōra*. The relevant association of ideas is established first by connecting place with what are termed the intelligible-and-intellectual gods and secondly, by connecting these intelligible-and-intellectual gods with the One, Being, and the mediate.[84]

Place is connected with the intelligible-and-intellectual gods in the following passage which begins the discussion of the "super-celestial place" mentioned by Plato in the *Phaedrus*:

> Now this order of gods is feminine, fertile, and produces all things with its intelligible powers. For this reason, Plato called it 'place' to the extent that it is the 'receptacle' of the paternal causes, gives birth, and leads the generative causes of the gods to the substantial production of lower things. In fact, having already named matter 'place of forms,' he then calls that principle 'mother' and 'nurse' of the reason-principles proceeding to it from being and from the paternal cause. It is because of this analogy and to the extent that the 'super-celestial place' is feminine, being maternally the cause of those things of which the intelligible father is the cause paternally, that Plato has given it such a name.[85]

The context of this passage is Proclus' doctrine that there exists a structural correlation between a triadic set of terms mentioned in the *Phaedrus*, a triadic set of terms mentioned in the *Parmenides*—included among those that are denied of the One in the first hypothesis and affirmed of the henads-beings in the second hypothesis—, and a triad of intelligible-and-intellectual gods.[86] The intelligible-and-intellectual gods constitute a mediating term between a higher group of intelligible gods and a lower group

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[84] For the structural principle underlying Proclus' division of the gods into the three triads of "intelligible," "intelligible-and-intellectual," and "intellectual" see below.

[85] *PT* IV. 10, 33. 17–34. 1 *thēluprepēs gar estin hē taxis hautē kai gonimos kai dunamesi noētais ta panta proagousa. hothen dē kai* topon *autēn ho Platōn ekalesen hōs* hupodochēn *tōn patrikōn aitiōn kai locheuousan kai proagousan tas gennētikas dunameis tōn theōn eis tas tōn deuterōn hupostaseis. epei kai tēn hulēn* topon eidōn *prosagoreusas* mētera *kalei kai* tithēnēn *tōn eis autēn apo tou ontos kai tēs patrikēs aitias proïontōn logōn. kata dē tēn toiautēn analogian kai* ton huperouranion topon *hōs thēluprepē kai toutōn aition onta mētrikōs, hōn patrikōs ho noētos patēr, tōi toiōide proseirēken onomati*.

[86] See Plato, *Phaedrus* 247A–248C interpreted at Proclus, *PT* IV. 4, 17. 15-IV. 7, 25. 28 as yielding the triad "super-celestial place" (*huperouranios topos*), "heaven" (*ouranos*), and "sub-celestial vault" (*hupouranios hapsis*) and Plato, *Parmenides* 143A–145B interpreted at Proclus, *PT* IV. 28, 80. 24-IV. 37, 109. 21 as yielding the triad "many" (*polla*), "whole-and-parts" (*holon kai merē*), and "shape" (*schēma*).

of intellectual gods. Of particular importance in the passage itself are the notions that the relation between intelligible-and-intellectual gods and the intelligible gods is that of "feminine" or material principles to "masculine" or formal principles, and that the relation between sensible forms and place or *khōra* in the *Timaeus* is analogous to the relation between intelligible forms and the super-celestial place in the *Phaedrus*.

The intelligible-and-intellectual gods are connected with the One, Being, and the mediate in the following passage which continues the discussion of Plato's "super-celestial place":

> We celebrate that cause by negations only, in that it exists before all things. We reveal the summits which have proceeded in a manner analogous with that cause simultaneously with affirmation and negation. To the extent that they have a transcendent superiority over inferior things, we reveal them negatively, but to the extent that they participate in things prior to them, we reveal them affirmatively. And indeed Plato calls the super-celestial place 'the really existing being,' 'the plain of truth,' the 'meadow.' and the intelligible watchtower of the gods, and not only 'without color,' 'without shape,' and 'without contact,' mixing affirmations with the negations.[87]

The context of this passage is again the structural correlation between the triadic set of terms mentioned in the *Phaedrus*, the triadic set mentioned in the *Parmenides*, and the triad of intelligible-and-intellectual gods, although the focus is no longer on the correlation between the triads considered as a whole but rather on that between the first members of the triads. Of particular importance in the present passage is the argument that the first member of the intelligible-and-intellectual triad of terms may itself become a subject of which further terms may be either denied or affirmed. This argument assumes an analogy between the first member of the intelligible-and-intellectual triad and *both* the first member of the intelligible triad *and* the principle transcending that triad[88]—i.e. exploiting the ambiguous

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[87] *PT* IV. 11, 37. 22–38. 3 *all'ekeinēn men monon dia tōn apophaseōn hōs pantōn proüparchousan humnoumen. tas de analogon ekeinēi proelthousas akrotētas homou kai kataphatikōs kai apophatikōs ekphainomen, hōs men exēirēmenas huperochas tōn deuterōn, apophantikōs, hōs de metechousas tōn pro autōn, kataphatikōs. kai gar* ton huperouranion topon ousian ontōs ousan *kai* tēs alētheias pedion *kalei kai* leimōna *kai noētēn periōpēn tōn theōn, kai ou monon* achrōmaton kai aschēmatiston kai anaphē, *mignus tais apophasesi tas kataphaseis*. The argument is repeated at *PT* IV. 11, 38. 11–27.

[88] The passage immediately preceding the one quoted also assumes an analogy between the first member of the intelligible-and-intellectual triad and the *third* member of the intellectual triad: namely, the "Demiurge" (*dēmiourgos*) of the *Timaeus*. See *PT* IV. 11, 37. 16–21. This point is repeated at *PT* IV. 11, 38. 14–21.

relation between the One and the One-Being noted earlier—and also specifies that the negation and affirmation represent relations to subsequent and preceding principles respectively when applied to the first member of the intelligible-and-intellectual triad.

It is not without significance that this sequence of arguments, in which Proclus weakens or subverts the priority of temporal presence through the coincidence of certain terms occupying the position of the Form of the Good and certain terms occupying that of *Khōra*, also embodies a definite shift from philosophy proper to theurgy.[89] This change of focus is most detectable in a passage that provides a summarizing account of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods in the *Theologia Platonica* as a whole, this account being divided into four phases in which the relation between Plato's doctrine expressed in the *Phaedrus* and the teaching of the *Oracula Chaldaica* becomes progressively more explicit.[90] In the first phase of this narrative,[91] Plato's doctrine translated into the terminology of the *Oracles* is that human souls—more precisely, our partial souls, the universal souls, and certain gods—revert under the guidance of the "separated leaders" (*apolutoi hēgemones*) [= extra-mundane gods].[92] They revert first towards the "sources" (*pēgai*) [= intellectual gods], secondly they revert from the sources to the "leaders of perfection" (*teleiotētos hēgemones*)[93] [= triad # 3 of the

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[89] Since Proclus does not provide us with a compact definition of theurgy, we must turn for this to his predecessor Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*. This treatise helps to clarify the question—often raised by modern interpreters with respect to a nomenclature consisting of the verbal elements *theos* ("god") + *ergein* ("to act")—whether *theourgia* is action *on* the gods or *by* the gods (*Myst*. IV. 2, 184. 1–13. Cf. I. 15, 48. 5–11). Three aspects of this activity that are particularly relevant to our discussion are distinguished: First, theurgy is concerned with the relation between humans and gods. It is a human action although, thanks to the achievable union between the lower and higher spheres, it can accomplish divine things. Secondly, this activity involves the manipulation of "ineffable symbols" (*aporrhēta sumbola*): natural objects like plants or stones and certain written characters. Third, theurgy involves the use of certain linguistic forms. It performs invocations of the gods which, again thanks to the achievable union between the lower and higher spheres, can be considered as equivalent to commands to the gods. In conclusion, then, theurgy is an action *on* the gods which is simultaneously an action *by* the "gods" which humans have become.

[90] *PT* IV. 9, 27. 7–31. 16. At *PT* IV. 9, 27. 8 Proclus refers to the "divinely-inspired science" (*entheos epistēmē*) of Plato at this point—hence, his agreement with the theurgic teaching of the *Chaldaean Oracles*.

[91] *PT* IV. 9, 27. 10–28. 10.

[92] In order to make this structure clear, Proclus' standard terminology for the various levels of beings will be given in brackets. The ascending sequence of beings used in this text is as follows: partial (= human) souls, universal souls, extra-mundane gods, intellectual gods, three triads of intelligible-and-intellectual gods, intelligible gods.

[93] i.e. the "rulers of perfection" (*teletarchai*) of the *Oracles*.

intelligible-and-intellectual gods], and thirdly from the leaders of perfection to the "maintaining gods" (*sunektikoi theoi*)[94] [= triad # 2 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods]. According to Proclus, the theurgists place their "hope of salvation" (*sōtērias elpis*) entirely in the sources mentioned. In the second phase,[95] Proclus introduces terminology used in Plato's *Phaedrus* to describe the same structure of reversion: namely, the "sub-celestial vault" (*hupourania hapsis*) [= triad # 3 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods], the "heavenly circuit" (*ouranou periphora*) [= triad # 2 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods], and the "super-celestial place" (*huperouranios topos*) [= triad # 1 of intelligible-and-intellectual gods] which together comprise the "kingdom of heaven" (*ouranou basileia*). The relation between this account and the theurgists' doctrine derived from the *Oracles* is then stated:

> According to the theurgists also, the ascent to the ineffable and intelligible powers which are the summits of all the intellectual gods[96] is by means of the maintaining gods.[97] But Plato has never revealed in discourse how from there forthwith the conjunction with the primary intelligible causes occurs.[98] For that conjunction is ineffable and is achieved through ineffable means, according to the theurgists' doctrine. And it is by means of that order[99] that the mystical union with the intelligible and primordial causes[100] is achieved.[101]

The reference to the failure of *discourse* in this passage is complemented by a reference to the efficacy of *action* in the ensuing argument.[102] In the third phase of Proclus' narrative,[103] Plato's doctrine translated into the terminology of the *Oracles* concerning the reversion of human souls successively to the separated gods, perfecting gods, maintaining gods, and intelligible gods

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94 i.e. the "maintainers" (*sunocheis*) of the *Oracles*.

95 *PT* IV. 9, 28. 10–29. 2.

96 = triad # 1 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods.

97 = triad # 2 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods.

98 = the intelligible gods.

99 = triad # 1 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods.

100 = the intelligible gods.

101 *PT* IV. 9, 28. 22–29. 2 *dia gar tōn sunektikōn theōn kai para tois theourgois hē anodos epi tas aphrastous kai noētas dunameis, tas tōn noerōn pantōn akrotētas. hopōs de enteuthen ēdē sunaptontai tois prōtois noētois, ouketi dia logōn ho Platōn exephēnen. arrhētos gar esti kai di'arrhētōn hē pros ekeina sunaphē, kathaper dē kai ekeinois dokei, kai dia tēs taxeōs tautēs hē mustikē pros tas noētas kai prōtourgous aitias henōsis*.

102 This allusion to failure of discourse may be connected with an earlier remark in the present context. At *PT* IV. 9, 28. 7–10 Proclus notes that the union among the maintaining gods [= triad #2 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods] is so close that certain great thinkers have supposed that one cannot capture the distinction there "by reasoning" (*logismos*). This is clearly a reference to Plotinus.

103 *PT* IV. 9, 29. 3–31. 5.

is re-stated together with a new element in the form of a reference to "parts in the whole" (*tōi holōi ta merē*) [= triad # 2 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods] suggested by the *Parmenides*. These remarks are followed by the establishment of a striking equation between Plato's description of the kingdom of heaven and theurgists' injunction to perform a certain ritual.

> For the mystical signs of the intelligible gods appear in this place,[104] as well as the unknown and ineffable beauties of the characters. And indeed initiation and vision are the symbols of the ineffable silence[105] and of the union with intelligible principles through mystical visions.[106] And here is the most marvelous thing of all. The theurgists' injunction to bury the body with the exception of the head in the most secret of their rites is exactly what Plato has set forth,[107] being moved by the gods themselves.[108]

In the fourth phase,[109] Proclus introduces terminology used in the *Oracles* to describe the same structure of reversion: namely, "love" (*erōs*) [= intellectual gods], "truth" (*alētheia*) [= triads #1, 2, and 3 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods], and "faith" (*pistis*) [= intelligible gods]. A necessarily analogical description of the highest stage of the reversion then follows in which faith is said to provide an "initiation and unitary silence" (*muēsis ... heniaia ..., sigē*) which is above all intellection, judgment, and cognition, and to establish souls—both the universal souls and human souls—"in the ineffable and unknown order of gods" (*en tōi arrhētōi kai agnōstōi genei tōn theōn*). That Plato forbore to describe this final stage[110] represents, of course, a further indication of what is at stake. The four phases into which we have divided Proclus' summarizing account of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods in the *Theologia Platonica* can therefore be seen as representing a transition not only from Plato's doctrine to the teaching of the *Chaldaean Ora-*

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104 = triad # 1 of the intelligible-and-intellectual gods.

105 Cf. *PT* IV. 9, 31. 5 "intelligible silence" (*noētē sigē*) [= the intelligible gods].

106 Cf. *PT* IV. 9, 30. 24–31. 1 where the "pure flash" (*augē kathara*) is similarly the symbol of "intelligible light" (*noēton phōs*) [= the intelligible gods].

107 Plato, *Phaedrus* 248A in Proclus' version "elevating the head of our charioteer towards the external place" (*tēi de tou hēniochou kephalēi pros ton exō topon huperairontes*).

108 *PT* IV. 9, 30. 12–20 *ta gar sunthēmata ta mustika tōn noētōn en ekeinōi tōi topōi prophainetai kai ta agnōsta iai arrhēta kalē tōn charaktērōn. kai gar hē muēsis kai hē epopteia tēs arrhētou sigēs esti sumbolon kai tēs pros ta noēta dia tōn mustikōn phasmatōn henōseōs. kai, ho pantōn estin thaumastotaton, hoti tōn theourgōn thaptein to sōma keleuontōn plēn tēs kephalēs en tēi mustikōtatēi tōn teletōn, ho Platōn kai touto proeilēphen hup'autōn kinoumenos tōn theōn.*

109 *PT* IV. 9, 31. 6–16.

110 He did evoke the stage below faith in referring to the "plain of truth" (*alētheias pedion*) at *Phaedrus* 248B. See p. 51.

cles, but also from philosophical argument to theurgic ritual. Most remarkable of all is the fact that the site of these transitions should itself be designated with the key terminology of "place."

Clearly, the main point at which Proclus weakens or subverts the priority of temporal presence is this sequence of arguments in which he has connected place through the intelligible-and-intellectual gods with the One, Being, and the mediate, and also indicated a transition from the sphere of philosophical discourse to that of theurgic action. The ramifications of this discovery are too extensive to pursue in the present context. We can however note that the main point at which Proclus weakens or subverts the priority of predicative language is a further sequence of arguments in which he establishes theurgic contemplation as the origin and completion of intellectual contemplation and exemplifies theurgic practice with the manipulation of symbols and the utterance of prayers[111]

That the activity of theurgy—or the quasi-cognitive state of the theurgist when performing that activity—actually surpasses the activity of intellection is stated explicitly on certain occasions by Proclus.[112] For example,

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[111] The theurgic process exploits the notions of similarity and analogy which will turn out to be of great importance in theology. In fact, *De Arte Sacrificali* depicts the world as a network of signifying items interlocking through "sympathy" (*sumpatheia*), as a hierarchical structure in which everything is present in everything else to some degree—visible things being thus connected with one another and with the invisible powers—and as a composite of elements drawn together by "similarity" (*homoiotēs*) (see *De Arte Sacrificali*, ed. J. Bidez 148. 5–149. 5; 149. 12 (sympathy); 148. 6 (everything in everything); 148. 23 (similarity)). As examples of interconnection between signs on the same level—i.e. members of the same series—, Proclus mentions the relation between the gemstone called the "Eye of Bel" and the human eye based on the similarity of their circular shape and of their emission of light, and that between the lotus and the human mouth based on the similarity of their opening and closing (*AS* 149. 15–17, 149. 22–24) As examples of interconnection between lower and higher signs—i.e. members of contiguous series—, he mentions the relation between heliotropes and selenotropes and the sun and moon based on an analogy between their movements, and that between the unfolding and enfolding of the lotus and the rising and setting of the sun based on their emission of light (*AS* 149. 15–17, 149. 19–22, 149, 25–27). Now the theurgic process follows a route through this network by reinforcing a chosen set of similar or analogous relations with a certain juxtaposition of objects or actions, the guiding force of theurgic activity being a kind of hermeneutic of the ineffable, or an intellective desire above the normal level of intellection, to which the default name of "the One" was applied. It is this intellectual desire that enables us to understand and exploit the network of similarities and analogies between the signs or symbols which itself is similar and analogous to the network of similarities and analogies between the henads-beings in order to revert upon the One itself.

[112] According to Proclus, both philosophy and theurgy constitute movements of reversion. The shift from procession to reversion is also a shift from objectivity to subjectivity, although

a passage in his *Commentarius in Parmenidem* dealing with the Platonic *lemma*: "Then none of the Forms is known by us, since we do not partake of Knowledge itself" (*Parm.* 134b) explains that the transcendent Forms are fully apprehensible only by the divine intellect. Among such Forms, although those on the level of the intellectual gods are accessible to "our intellectual knowledge ... the partial intuitions of our soul" (*hē hēmetera noēsis ... hai meristai epibolai tēs hēmeteras psuchēs*)[113]—since the Demiurge has assigned to us a limited innate knowledge of this kind—, those on the level of the intelligible-and-intellectual Forms "transcend our intuitions ... are knowable only to divinely-possessed souls" (*exēirētai tōn hēmeterōn epibolōn ... autais monais ... tais entheastikais psuchais*).[114] The context makes clear that the two kinds of Forms are those associated with the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* and the super-celestial place of the *Phaedrus* respectively, while the technical terminology indicates that the two kinds of activity dealing with these two kinds of Forms are normal intellection and theurgic operation.

That state of mind of the theurgist when performing his activity is explained the *Platonic Theology*, where a quasi-cognitive[115] state above the non-predicative thinking of the divine intellect and the momentary incursions into non-predicative thinking of human intellect is assigned to the theurgist. In one passage, this quasi-cognitive state is identified with the

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the term "subjectivity" must not be understood in a modern (post-Cartesian or post-Kantian) sense. On the notion of subjectivity in Neoplatonism see Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 6 and 82–121.

[113] It is important to understand the use of the term *epibolē* here. In disagreement with Plotinus for whom the human soul has direct access to the timeless activity of the hypostasis of intellect, Proclus holds that the human soul can enter into this timeless activity only at moments of "intuition" (which however can be more or less frequent). See *CParm.* III, 807. 20–810. 15 and *CParm.* VII. 1165. 13–1166. 12. Proclus seems to hold that these momentary incursions into the timeless activity are aided by the practice of theurgy. See *PT* I. 25, 111. 10–12.

[114] *CParm.* IV, 949. 10–950. 26. Cf. *CParm.* IV, 948, 12–30 where Proclus connects the theory that the human soul does not have full apprehension of the transcendent Forms with his view that the human soul descends fully from the intellectual realm. An unattributed theory stating the contrary to this on both counts (actually that of Plotinus) is rejected. For the relation of the human soul to transcendent Forms on the intellectual level see further *CParm.* V, 1025. 22–28 and *CTim.* I, 302, 17–25. For the broader context cf. *CTim.* II, 241. 29–242. 22 and III, 333. 28–334. 3.

[115] We introduce the term *quasi*-cognition as a convenient label for the special cognition above normal cognition which Proclus expresses in various forms of circumlocution. For example, see *PT* I. 23, 104. 21–105. 4 on the gods "wisdom" (*sophia*).

"truth" (*to alēthes*) mentioned in the *Republic*.[116] According to Proclus, truth among the gods is an "undifferentiated union … a knowledge transcending all knowledge" (*henōsis … adiairetos … gnōsis huperechei pasēs gnōseōs*) through which they know all things—universals and particulars, beings and non-beings, the eternal and the temporal—in simultaneity and without mediation.[117] In a later passage, the quasi-cognitive state is identified with the first member of the triad of "faith" (*pistis*), "truth" (*alētheia*), and "love" (*erōs*)—in its turn identified with the triad of "theurgic power" (*theourgikē dunamis*), "divine philosophy" (*theia philosophia*), and "erotic madness" (*erōtikē mania*) respectively—suggested by the *Oracula Chaldaica*.[118] According to Proclus, this theurgic faith surpasses intellection, is "as transcendent of all ambiguity, divided intuition, and movement as is the Good" (*pasēs amphibolias kai diēirēmenēs epibolēs kai kinēseōs exēirēmenon hōs to agathon*), but enables the intellect to operate above its normal level[119] Reference to the gods in the first and to the theurgist in the second passage does not indicate two radically different kinds of quasi-cognitive state, given that that the theurgist becomes a "god" during his operation and afterwards retains some recollection of the truth glimpsed therein.[120]

The close relation between theurgy and intellection leads to important developments in Proclus' theory of knowledge. As we have already mentioned,[121] the human soul cannot grasp the contents of the divine or demiurgic intellect in the timeless manner in which intellect understands itself but only through a sequence of "changes of intuitions" (*metabaseis tōn epibolōn*) occurring in time which might be compared to a "circular dance" (*perichoreuein*) around intellect.[122] Now this partial access to the intellectual sphere from below seems to be complemented by a certain access to the intellectual sphere from above. As we will later discover,[123] the origination

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116 Plato, *Republic* II, 382E.

117 *PT* I. 21, 97. 7–98. 12. This truth corresponds roughly with the *pronoia* ("providence" or "pre-intellection") of the gods to be discussed below. See p. 64.

118 *PT* I. 25, 109. 3–110. 16 and I. 25, 112. 25–113. 10. Cf. *Oracula Chaldaica*, ed. É. des Places, frr. 43–48. Platonic corroboration of this triad is found in texts such as *Symposium* 201C–204C, *Republic* II, 381E–383A, and *Laws* V, 730C.

119 *PT* I. 25, 110. 17–111. 24.

120 At *PT* I. 3, 14. 21–15. 6 Proclus speaks of a highest type of theology which, as explicitly supra-intellectual, must have been revealed through theurgy.

121 See above pp. 56–57.

122 *CParm*. III, 807. 20–810. 15. Cf. *CParm*. VII. 16–24 Cousin. It is in the sense of this dancing around intellect that the greatest philosophers are frequently described as "Bacchantes" (*sumbakcheuein, anabakcheuein*) by Proclus. See *CParm*. I. 618, 3–4, *PT* I. 1, 6. 23–7. 1.

123 See below pp. 65–66.

of the hierarchical and coordinate structural divisions of the universe is associated with the *pronoia* of the henads by which is meant a "pre-intellection" of subsequent things by henads that not only "subsist above intellect" (*tou nou prouparchein*) in the normal sense but also are "intellectual in a causal manner" (*noerai … kat'aitian*).[124] If it is possible for the human soul to become unified with these henads, then the latters' pre-intellection must in some sense become ours.[125]

Of course, Proclus has described all of the above in discursive language, employing the method that he is forced to continue using in various texts outlining his general method of theurgic practice. This practice is guided throughout by a certain "sign" (*sunthēma*) or "symbol" (*sumbolon*) which we discover in ourselves when entering into "the ineffable of our proper nature" (*to tēs heautou phuseōs arrhēton*).[126] With respect to the Father of the Universe,[127] "by means of the mystical sign belonging to each of us, we unite with him, shedding our own proper nature, striving to be nothing but the sign of him and to participate in him, because of our desire for that unknown nature and the source of the Good."[128] The mystical sign is also that "one-in-us" (*to hen to en hēmin*) or "intellection of unity" (*tou henos ennoia*) which is actually signified when, in our activity of striving towards the un-nameable cause, "we thus name the latter 'One'" (*houtōs onomazomen to hen*).[129] "Therefore intellection that is silent exists before intellection capable of utterance, and desire is before every intellection and poised in concealment on those devoid of intellection."[130] Thus, the guiding force of theurgic activity is a kind of hermeneutic of the ineffable, or an intellective desire above normal intellection, to which the default name of "the One" is applied.[131]

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[124] *ET*, prop. 163, 142. 9–16. Cf. *ET*, prop. 129, 114. 22–25.

[125] The ascent of the human soul to the *pre*-intellective state seems to be described explicitly—in a context where theurgy is also involved—at *PT* IV. 14, 43. 24–44. 7.

[126] *PT* II. 8, 56, 16–57. 3.

[127] i.e. the One, expressed in Chaldaean terminology.

[128] *PT* II. 8, 56. 22–26 *kai dia tou prosēkontos autōi mustikou sunthēmatos henizetai tēn oikeian phusin apoduomena, kai monon einai to ekeinou sunthēma speudonta kai monou metechein ekeinou, pothōi tēs agnōstou phuseōs kai tēs tou agathou pēgēs*.

[129] *CParm*. VII (Moerbeke) 509. 10–510. 12. This and the next two passages will be cited in the Greek reconstructed by the modern editor from William Moerbeke's medieval Latin translation.

[130] *CParm*. VII (Moerbeke) 509. 35–510. 2 *kai dia touto kai tēn sigōmenēn noēsin einai pro tēs lektikēs kai tēn ephesin pro pasēs noēseōs anekphanton kai tois noēseōs amoirois epochoumenēn.*

[131] At *CParm*. VII (Moerbeke) 510. 5–6 Proclus explains that unity is so applied because it is

The mystical sign—also called the "flower of intellect" (*tou nou … to anthos*)[132]—guides us through a theurgic process the nature of which is explained in Proclus' short treatise *De Arte Sacrificia*. This process begins with the theurgist taking up an object "appropriately" (*oikeiōs*)—for example, he might base his ritual on a specific gemstone—or else "blending" (*misgein*) things—for example, the ritual might require the simultaneous use of a specific gemstone and a specific herb.[133] These objects are also called "signs" (*sunthēmata*) and "symbols" (*sumbola*)—their sharing of this terminology with the "one-in-us" suggesting that they relate to the latter as more specific or subordinate to more generic or primal—and are often employed singly in theurgic activity.[134] However, sometimes when the "emanation" (*aporrhoia*) from the divine grows weak as it enters into dividedness—thereby becoming less useful for the theurgist's purposes—this process can be counteracted by the juxtaposition of a variety of signs.[135] The theurgist's purpose is understood by Proclus to be essentially twofold. From one viewpoint, his purpose is to influence the highest powers in two ways: either by summoning them or repelling them. In general, sympathetic relations between theurgic objects produce the former and antipathetic relations between such items the latter effect.[136] From another viewpoint, the theurgist's purpose is to cause the souls of those participating in the ritual to return to the higher powers. In this case, the most useful theurgic objects are bitumen and water.[137]

That the activity of theurgy—or the quasi-cognitive state of the theurgist when performing that activity—surpasses the activity of intellection[138] clearly does not lead Proclus to conclude that the latter can be dispensed with. In fact, he reserves the highest praise for the Socrates of the *Phaedrus* who having achieved a divinely-inspired state analogous to that enjoyed

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"the most excellent of all the things that we know" (*to hen semnotaton esti touto tōn en hēmin gnōrimōn pantōn*).

[132] Cf. *PT* I. 3, 15. 1–6 where this flower of intellect is said to unite us first to the henads and then, through the intermediary of the henads, to the One itself. The image of the flower, like much of Proclus' teaching on theurgy, is derived from the *Oracula Chaldaica*. See *CO*, frr. 1, 20, and 49.

[133] *AS* 150. 25–26.

[134] See *AS* 150. 10; 150. 17; 151. 1–2; 151. 21. Cf. *CTim*. I. 210. 18, etc.

[135] *AS* 150. 26–151. 5.

[136] *AS* 151, 10–13. Cf. 148. 21–23, 151. 16.

[137] *AS* 151. 10–13.

[138] See especially *CParm*. IV, 949. 10–950. 26 and *PT* I. 25, 109. 3–110. 16. and the discussion above on pp. 55–56.

by the theurgists, embarked on a philosophical exposition.[139] This relation between theurgy and intellection is indicated by Proclus' custom of inserting prayers before the discursive argument in a philosophical text,[140] given that prayers and invocations were a major component of theurgic ritual.

For the principle involved we may turn to the *Commentarius in Timaeum*.[141] Here, Proclus uses the prefacing of the cosmological exposition with a prayer—in which Timaeus imitates the Demiurge—as an opportunity to explore the significance of "prayer" (*euchē*) itself. Prayer—as a psychological state rather than a verbal form[142]—is a form of reversion[143] in which the analogical structures of signs and symbols are activated in order to unite those who pray with the gods and *vice versa*. It exists on five levels of which the lowest is knowledge of the orders of gods, the middle is "conjunction" (*sunaphē*) between "the summit of the soul" (*to akrotaton tēs psuchēs*) and the gods, and the highest is "union" (*henōsis*) between our "unity" (*hen*) and the gods' "unity" (*hen*) in a single activity.[144] Prayer has as its "substance" (*ousia*) the binding of souls to the gods, as its "perfection" (*teleiotēs*) the increasing unification, and as its "activity" (*energeia*) the identification between the gods' and our concerns[145] Finally, prayer has as its efficient cause the power of the gods, as its final cause the goods of the soul, as its paradigmatic cause the first principles of being, as its formal cause the assimilative principles, and as its material cause the signs or symbols.[146]

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[139] See *PT* I. 4, 17. 25–18. 12 and *PT* IV. 5, 18. 23–25. Along the same lines, Proclus frequently attributes to Plato a "divinely-inspired philosophy" (*entheos … philosophia*) or "divinely-inspired teaching" (*entheos huphēgēsis*): see *PT* I. 2, 8. 22; I. 3, 13. 8–9, etc.

[140] For an elaborated prayer see *CParm*. I. 617. 1–618. 14 where Proclus lists the deities to which his prayer is addressed and also the benefits for which he prays in each case. These include *1. All gods and goddesses*—guiding his mind in this contemplation, kindling light of truth, opening his soul to reception of Plato's inspired teaching; *2. intelligible gods*—fullness of wisdom; *3. intellectual gods*—power of ascent; *4. supermundane gods*—activity free of the material; *5. mundane gods*—a winged life Cf. the brief references at *PT* I. 1, 7. 9–21 and III. 1, 6. 4–7.

[141] *CTim*. I. 206. 26–214. 12.

[142] The verbal form—in direct discourse—would presumably be threefold: *a*. the name of the divine giver, *b*. an imperative ("give me …"), *c*. the name of the divine gift. It would therefore include a combination of predicative (*a,c*) and non-predicative (*b*). For this structure in indirect discourse see the example in note 140 above.

[143] Proclus describes it as both "reversion" (*epistrophē*) and "ascent" (*anodos*).

[144] *CTim*. I, 211. 8–212. 1. The distinction between the middle and the highest stage seems to be based on the distinction between uniting with the henads-*beings* and uniting with the (pure) henads. Proclus does not speak explicitly of uniting with the One itself at this point, although possibly this is implied by our union with the gods' own unity.

[145] *CTim*. I, 212. 29–213. 7.

[146] *CTim*. I, 213. 8–18.

Continuity and Causality in Proclus

Returning to what might be called the main tendency of Proclus' philosophy, we should recall that in our earlier exploration of the relations between the One, Being, and the henads, considerable reference to the notion of mediation had been necessary. This fact gave initial support to Derrida's hypothesis that such a notion of mediation, which further implies the priority of presence over the other dimensions of time, is one of the defining features of traditional Platonic philosophy. However, the most compelling evidence in favour of this hypothesis is Proclus' expansion of the notion of mediation especially with the notion of continuity in the context of a general theory of causality within the divine sphere.[147]

It is proposition 28 to the effect that "every productive cause brings things similar to itself into existence before things dissimilar from itself" (*pan to paragon ta homoia pros heauto pro tōn anomoiōn huphistēsin*) that primarily addresses the question of continuity.[148] Together with those axioms dealing with superiority of cause over effect (# 7), non-diminution of the cause (prop. 26), causation through overflow of power (# 27), and correlation between unity and power (props. 36–37), the principle stated in this proposition can perhaps be seen as constituting the foundation of Proclus' entire metaphysical system. It is applied when he postulates the existence of self-causing principles between the One or Good which is only causing and bodily images which are only caused, principles that exist for the whole of time between those that are outside time and those that exist in parts of time, and other terms mediating between the completely discrete or opposed in the chain of causation. Obviously, the notion of continuity is connected with the notion of similarity (*homoiotēs*). However, Proclus nowhere seems to explain the precise origins or nature of either the former

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147 "Continuity" in Proclus' Greek is *sunecheia*. For the occurrence of this term see Proclus, *ET*, props. 21, 24. 13; 112, 98. 36; 125, 112. 4; 132, 116. 31, etc.

148 *ET*, prop. 28, 32. 10–34. 2. Other propositions addressing the question of continuity are *ET*, prop. 103, 92. 13 that "all things are in all things, but in each case according to its own nature" (*panta en pasin, oikeiōs de hekastōi*), and *ET*, prop. 65, 62. 13–14 that "everything subsisting in any way does so either primordially according to cause or according to existence, or iconically according to participation" (*pan to hopōsoun huphestos ē kat'aitian estin archoeidōs ē kath'huparxin ē kata methexin eikonikōs*). By combining these propositions, Proclus can posit a ninefold continuous structure consisting of Being (containing life and intellect existentially and according to cause), Life (containing being vitally and according to participation and intellect vitally according to cause), and Intellect (containing being and life intellectually and according to participation). This ninefold continuous structure underlies the organization of the triads of intelligible, intelligible-and-intellectual, and intellectual gods.

or the latter. His silence on the question of the origin of continuity perhaps results from the fact that the One should be the cause of continuity, although there is a problem in imputing causality as such to the One, and his silence on the question of the origin of similarity from the fact that logical principles are being used to outline the metaphysical system, whereas similarity is a hermeneutic rather than a logical category. On both counts, we are left with the task of reconstructing Proclus' thought-process.

This thought-process can perhaps be analyzed into the following components: *a*. the notion of similarity itself, *b*. the notion of analogy (or homology), and *c*. the relation between similarity and analogy. These might be viewed as stages of progressive stabilizations of the inherent dynamism of Proclus' theory of first principles and therefore as intensifications of the priority of presence over the other dimensions of time.[149]

a. The notion of *similarity* would perhaps represent a first level of stabilization. According to Proclus, "everything complete proceeds to generate those things which it is capable of producing, itself imitating the one principle of the universe" (*pan to teleion eis apogennēseis proeisin hōn dunatai*

[149] The kind of thinking underlying the argumentation to be summarized in the next few paragraphs can perhaps best be explained in terms of the theory of mediation set forth in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* in connection with the substance of Soul (*CTim*. II, 193. 7–211. 30). The structure of Soul is—according to the teaching of Plato's cosmology—fundamentally harmonic, consisting of three "means" (*mesotētes*) and seven types of "ratio" (*logoi*) derived from the numbers set out in the figure of the lambda. Considered metaphysically, the geometrical mean relates to the harmonic and arithmetical means as monad to dyad, the geometrical mean being associated with substance, the harmonic mean with sameness, and the arithmetical mean with otherness (*CTim*. II, 198. 14–200. 21). Now given that the mathematical mean together with its two extremities produces a "proportionality" or "analogy" (*analogia*), a certain parallelism emerges between this discussion and the arguments about monads and series to be studied in the next few paragraphs with respect to the *Elementatio Theologica*. Moreover, the connection between the two discussions is strengthened by the fact that the means within Soul represent more general metaphysical structures that obtain even above the level of Soul. For instance, the harmonic mean predominates among the more universal things and shows that those greater in substance have more power vested in sameness, whereas the arithmetical mean predominates among more particular things and shows that those lesser in substance have more power vested in otherness (*CTim*. II, 199. 32–200. 6). Now according to Proclus, the means within Soul are not so much mathematical means as metaphysical "bonds" (*desmoi*) (see *CIT* II, 198. 30–31, etc.), a Greek term that in everyday usage signifies not only something that connects two things but also something that reduces to immobility. In that case, the introduction of means-bonds in a metaphysical structure unifies the multiple and *stabilizes* the dynamic aspects of that structure. Furthermore an increase in the number of means-bonds in the metaphysical structure will be accompanied by an increase in the unification and stability of that structure.

paragein, auto mimoumenon tēn mian tōn holōn archēn).[150] But similarity is involved in the nature as well as the origin of secondary causation. Thus, all such processes involve a "procession" (*proodos*) in which an effect becomes dynamically distinct from its cause followed by a "reversion" (*epistrophē*) in which the effect becomes dynamically identified with its cause,[151] the procession being dependent on "similarity" (*to homoion*) according to proposition # 28.

b. The notion of *analogy* (*homology*) might be conceived as a second level of stabilization. The foundation of this notion is provided by the assumption that each primary hypostasis consists of a "series" (*taxis, seira*) which begins from a monadic One, Intellect, or Soul, proceeds into a "coordinate" (*sustoichon*) plurality of ones, intellects, or souls, and then reverts to the monadic One, Intellect, or Soul.[152] Each series has a "distinctive property" (*idiotēs, idea*)—the unitary, the, intellectual, the psychic—which the monad has "in a primary mode" (*prōtōs*) and the coordinate plurality "in a derivative mode" (*kath'uphesin*).[153] The monadic One, Intellect, or Soul is "unparticipated" (*amethekton*) whereas the coordinate plurality of ones, intellects, and souls is "participated" (*metechomenon*) with respect to lower terms.[154] The monadic One, Intellect, or Soul is also "simultaneously everywhere and nowhere" (*pantachou hama kai oudamou*) with respect to the co-ordinate plurality of ones, intellects, and souls.[155] Homology and analogy come into play inasmuch as each member of a series can participate in the monad of the immediately higher series either through the monad of its own series—i.e. through "similarity" (*to homoion*)—or through the member of the higher series having an equivalent position with respect to its own monad—i.e. through "analogy" (*analogia*).[156]

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[150] *ET*, props. 25, 28. 21–30. 9.

[151] *ET*, props. 29, 34. 3–11 and 32, 36. 3–10.

[152] *ET*, prop. 21, 24. 1–21.

[153] *ET*, prop. 97, 86. 8–26. Proclus seems to suggest that the notion of "distinctive property" is a more generic or higher counterpart of the notion of "form" (*eidos*) at *ET*, prop. 74, 70. 15–27: a position consistent with his view that distinctive properties apply to all hypostases whereas forms are contained within intellectual hypostases only.

[154] *ET*, props. 23, 26. 22–24, 28. 20.

[155] *ET*, prop. 98, 86. 27–88. 9.

[156] *ET*, props. 108, 96. 9–109, 96. 31. In understanding the construction of Proclus' metaphysical system there is a problem of reconciling two distinct principles of structuration: namely *1*. (used mostly in the *Elementatio Theologica*) based on the monad and a series of unspecified length, and *2*. (used mainly in the *Theologia Platonica*) based on the internal subdivision of triads.

c. The notion of a *relation between similarity and analogy* would perhaps represent a third level of stabilization. According to Proclus' proposition 110, the members of the lower series closer to their monad have the possibility of participating in the monad of the higher series through both similarity and analogy, whereas the members of the lower series further from their monad have only the first possibility.[157] This would suggest that analogy is, strictly speaking, *either* a higher relation contrasted with the category of similarity *or* a higher relation within the category of similarity.[158]

Given that continuity, similarity, and analogy (homology) are related in the manner described, we may pass from the question of the analogical structures of causality to that of the causality of the analogical structures themselves. Unfortunately, Proclus does not seem to provide us with any definitive account of this second topic. However, we can perhaps explore it tentatively by saying that from different viewpoints, the One, the henads, and Being are responsible for the formation of analogical structures. This fact seems consistent with the close relation between these three principles suggested earlier.[159]

Attributing the origin of analogical structures to the One is problematic, given that—at least in the *Elementatio Theologica*—a silence is maintained regarding the One's causal function in general. Careful study of the most relevant discussion elsewhere reveals that Proclus attributes causality to the One when speaking in a loose sense, although he also holds that placing the One in a causal relation would impair its transcendent status, and therefore denies causality of the One when speaking in a strict sense.[160] The two main references to this question in the *Elementatio Theologica* must be under-

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[157] *ET*, prop. 110, 98. 1–17.

[158] The second interpretation is perhaps reinforced by props. 112, 98. 33–100. 4 which speaks of the members of the lower series closer to their monad as "having the form of … being conjoined by similarity" (*morphēn echein … dia tēn homoiotēta sunaptesthai*) with the higher series.

[159] For instance, where the henadic series was said to be "united in nature with the One" (*tōi heni sumphuomenos*). See pp. 46–47.

[160] For the One and affirmation of causality see *PT* II. 9, 60, 6–22; III. 1, 5. 17–18; III. 6, 26. 8–9. At *TP* III. 7, 29. 7–30. 2 Proclus is forced to cite Plato's unambiguous statements to this effect in the *Republic, Parmenides, Letter to Dionysius* and *Philebus*. For the One and denial of causality see *PT* II. 9, 59. 14–16; II. 9. 60, 1–6; III. 7, 30. 5–7; III. 21, 73. 25–74. 3. At *PT* III. 8, 31. 14–23 Proclus explains that for the One to enter into causality would imply two unacceptable things: a relation to the subsequent and a mediating power between itself and its effect. Cf. *PT* III. 24, 83. 22–84. 3.

stood against the background of such assumptions. First, it is argued that all beings derive their "bare existence" (*haplōs einai*) from the One and a certain "communion of nature" (*to de sumphues einai*) from a specific henad,[161] this communion being the participating term's display of the henad's "superessential distinctive property" (*idiotēs huperousios*) on its own level. This would imply that the origin of determinate being as a whole—which must include analogical structures—should not be attributed to the One. Secondly, it is argued that the participated terms in each series are pervaded by a "sameness" (*tauton ti, tautotēs*) derived from their unparticipated monads, the unparticipated monads themselves being "analogous with the One" (*tōi heni analogon*) and therefore "referable to the One" (*eis to hen anagesthai*).[162] This would mean that the relation between analogical structures and the One—including the causal relation—is to some extent dependent on the analogical structures.[163]

It seems relatively straightforward to attribute the origin of analogical structures to the henads. In an important sequence of propositions, Proclus argues that each henad has a "distinctive property" (*idiotēs*);[164] that henads confer on beings not only their distinctive properties—since the monad of each series constitutes something that "is referred to the gods … is analogous with the gods … a distinctive divine property" (*tois theois aneitai … tois theois analogoun … hē theia idiotēs*)[165]—but also the interrelation between those distinctive properties;[166] and that each henad "produces a being in producing itself" (*heautōi to on sumparagein*).[167] It seems that the henads are the origin of all the structural divisions in the universe—involving both hierarchical and coordinate relations between terms—and that this origination constitutes the essential meaning of his doctrine of *pronoia* ("providence").[168]

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[161] *ET*, props. 137, 120. 31–122. 6.

[162] *ET*, prop. 100, 90. 1–16.

[163] According to *PT* III. 8, 32. 1–6 references to the One as cause are really references to the "one" represented by the First Limit. On the First Unlimited and First Infinity see *ET*, prop. 90, 82. 6–16.

[164] *ET*, props. 125, 110. 29–32 and 145, 128. 5–16. Proclus also frequently uses the term *idiotēs* to mean the distinctive property of being a specific type of god—paternal maternal, etc.—or of being a god in general—as opposed to an intellect or a soul. See *ET*, props. 150, 132. 1–159, 140. 4 for examples of the former and *ET*, props. 114, 100. 22–25; 118, 104. 5–7; 129, 114. 20–22; 138, 122. 7–8; and 145, 128. 1–2 for examples of the latter.

[165] *ET*, prop. 139, 122, 21–33.

[166] *ET*, prop. 140, 124. 14–18.

[167] *ET*, prop. 144, 126. 21–23.

[168] Or "pre-intellection."

For Proclus, the henads exercise providence towards secondary things while "assuming no relation" (*oute ... schesin anadechesthai*) towards the beings for whom they provide, since they exercise providence "through their being and without relation" (*tōi einai ... aschetōs*), any relation implying an "addition to being" (*prosthesis tou einai*)[169] However, providence is actually twofold in that some divine things—i.e. the henads—exercise "transcendent" (*exēirēmenē*) providence towards the members of the lower series, while others—i.e. the henads-beings—exercise "co-ordinate" (*suntetagmenē*) providence towards the lower members of their own series.[170]

Attributing the origin of analogical structures to beings is as problematic as attributing it to the One, although for different reasons. Any solution to this question depends on understanding Proclus' notion of beings—for example, beings, lives, and intellects—in the sense of "self-constituted" (*authupostata*) principles.[171] Considered in themselves, self-constituted principles are those that revert upon themselves in order to produce further principles—of a higher and ontologically independent status—by a kind of internal subdivision.[172] According to Proclus, these principles have properties which effectively remove them from time and space.[173] The class of self-constituted principles corresponds in most respects with that of "self-perfect" (*autoteleis*) principles.[174] These non-temporal and non-spatial principles produce further terms—of a lower and ontologically dependent status—not by internal subdivision but by reverting to the monad of their series.[175] Considered in relation to the One, the self-constituted principles

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[169] *ET*, prop. 122, 108. 1–24.

[170] *ET*, prop. 141, 124. 19–26. Proclus introduces "divine intellect" as a relevant example of a henad-being at *ET*, prop. 134, 118. 20 when he explains that this hypostasis "exercises intellection as an intellect but providence as a god" (*noei men hōs nous, pronoei de hōs theos*).

[171] See *ET*, prop. 40, 42. 8–29—Proclus also considers souls as self-constituted principles. For more detailed discussion of some of the issues raised in this paragraph see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, pp. 49–54, 125–137, 305–307.

[172] Since Proclus does not discuss theoretically the relation between self-constitution and internal subdivision, we must turn to texts like Damascius' *De Principiis*, eds. L.G. Westerink and J. Combès (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986–1991), II, 127. 12–20 and II, 130, 6–132. 20 for explanation. However Proclus illustrates the application of the theory extensively in *Theologia Platonica* III–V.

[173] *ET*, props. 41, 42. 30–51, 50. 6.

[174] *ET*, props. 63, 60. 1–64, 62. 12. There is at least one difference between self-constituted and self-perfect principles: namely, that the self-perfect category includes henads—see *ET*, prop. 64, 62. 5–12—whereas the self-constituted category is never said to include them. The class of self-constituted principles also overlaps with the class of "self-sufficient" (*autarkeis*) principles. For the latter see *ET*, props. 16, 18. 13; 40, 42. 12–13; 42, 44. 20–21; 45, 46. 14–15, etc.

[175] *ET*, props. 64, 60. 20–62. 12.

are disjoined from the One causally by their *self-constitution*[176] but conjoined to it analogically by their *self-hood* itself.[177] Considered in relation to the henads, the self-constituted principles have a peculiar status. Given that the hierarchy of principles produced by the internal subdivision of self-constituted principles turns out to be identical with the homological structures produced by henadic multiplication,[178] it seems reasonable to assume that self-constitutive principles are productive of such hierarchical configurations to the extent that they are *identified with their henads*.[179]

Derrida on Heidegger and Heidegger's Gods

We began this chapter by summarizing Derrida's formulation of his so-called *Paradigm A* of negative theology in the essay: "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." To repeat: the author had at that point arranged several passages of Plato under the headings of "two movements or tropics of negativity" or again "two radically heterogeneous structures." The first movement included Plato's discussion of the principle "beyond Being" (*epekeina tēs ousias*) of the *Republic* and the second his remarks concerning the principle of "place" (*khōra*) in the *Timaeus*, Derrida here drawing attention to the fact that the Form of the Good and the Receptacle are characterized by negativity or otherness both in themselves and in relation to one another.[180] It is interesting to note that when the author comes to formulate *Paradigm C* of negative theology later in his essay, he quotes passages in Heidegger referring to the same two tropics.[181] These show that the latter had not only come to a similar conclusion regarding their philosophical importance but had initiated a philosophical critique along the same lines as Derrida's deconstruction. According to one quoted passage,[182] the posing of the question of

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[176] See Proclus, *CParm*. VII, 1151. 6–25. The One and the henads are not self-constituted because they have no internal division.

[177] At *ET*, props. 40, 42. 14–17 and 42. 26–29 the self-constituted principle is said to be closer to the Good than the non-self-constituted because it is "more autonomous" (*kuriōteron*).

[178] Proclus' discussion of the "intelligible" (*noēton*) realm in *PT* III. 7, 28. 23 ff. shows this very clearly. Here we see a multiplication of triads within triads which is simultaneously that of limit, unlimited, and mixed (a primarily henadic structure), and that of being, life, and intellect (a primarily non-henadic structure) …

[179] This also explains how Proclus can say that a henad produces itself by producing a being.

[180] See pp. 31–32 above.

[181] Derrida, *HTAS*, pp. 122–123/*CNPP*, pp. 584–586.

[182] Derrida quotes here from *On the Essence of Ground*.

Being that corresponds to the movement of transcending was successfully captured in Plato's formula *epekeina tēs ousias*, although according to two other texts cited,[183] the question "of a wholly other place" (*nach dem ganz anderen Ort*) was raised but not pursued in the Greek philosopher's discussion of *Khōra*. Similarly, the identification of the questioning movement of transcendence with the wholly other place suggested by the verbal connection between *khōrismos* ("separation") and *Khōra* was not sufficiently developed.[184]

We continued the discussion by expanding Derrida's formulation of *Paradigm A* of negative theology into a much more elaborate conceptual structure. This was done by isolating the notions of mediation, continuity, and causality that determine to varying degrees Plato's account of the Form of the Good and of *Khōra*, notions that reinforce the priority of presence over other spatial dimensions and of predicative over non-predicative language assumed in Plato's thought more generally, and then by studying in considerable detail the elaboration of similar ideas within Proclus' doctrine of the henads or gods. Now it is interesting to note that Heidegger also writes a great deal about gods in such works as the *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry, Contributions to Philosophy* (*Of Enowning*), and *Mindfulness*. We will therefore conclude this chapter by summarizing some of these ideas in order to reveal the similarities and dissimilarities between Proclus' and Heidegger's respective views on this subject with special reference to the manner in which the metaphysics of presence and the logic of predication, together with the ideas about mediation, continuity, and causality that are reinforced by such assumptions, affect the development of their respective narratives. As a by-product of this analysis, some further light will be cast on the famous *grapheme* of Being's cancellation that Derrida will also quote from Heidegger in his *Paradigm C* of negative theology.

Heidegger's treatise *Mindfulness*[185] includes an important section entitled simply "gods" that presents in a compact form the various meditations on this topic[186] that had been set out more discursively in some of the philoso-

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[183] Derrida here quotes from *Introduction to Metaphysics* and *What is Called Thinking?*

[184] See chapter 2.4, notes 8–10.

[185] *Besinnung*. See Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, trans. P. Emad and T. Kalary (London-New York: Continuum, 2006). This treatise was written in 1938–1939 but not published until 1997 (as volume 66 of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe*). It was not therefore available to Derrida at the time of writing "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials?"

[186] section xviii, §§ 70–71, pp. 203–225.

pher's earlier texts[187] and will be present continually but more allusively in his writings of the 1950s. The first subsection of his discussion of gods is placed under the heading: "The Fundamental Knowing-Awareness (*Das wesentliche Wissen*)."[188] Here, Heidegger says that any thinking or speaking of gods depends on a state of mind[189] called fundamental knowing-awareness which persists in a reverence *for* considered as questioning *of* the Ground without Ground,[190] this reverence and questioning arising from another state of mind called "dismay" (*Ent-setzen*).[191] More specifically, the fundamental knowing-awareness inquires into three possibilities or ways in which the difference between Being and beings is kept open as *the* primal decision. In accordance with the first possibility[192]—which has been indicated in the writings of Hölderlin and Nietzsche—the questioning includes *whether*, from within the primal tension[193] between the totality of human projects[194] and the basis of concealment and unconcealment as such,[195] the questioning will attune man towards Be-ing and express this attunement in Language, in order to bring about a dialogue having the character of a beginning[196] between gods who are overcoming godlessness and humans who are overcoming dehumanization. Without going into all the details of Heidegger's account at this point, we should simply note its most important points. These are: that there is no attempt to state exactly the nature of the gods,[197] and that any approach to the gods by men moves within the most fundamental sphere(s) of questioning, of practical decision-making regarding our relation to the difference between Being and beings,[198] and of language.

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[187] See especially Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy* (*Of Enowning*), trans. P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), § 126, p. 172 [GA 65, pp. 243–244]; § 259, pp. 308–309 [GA 65, pp. 437–439]; § 279, pp. 357–358 [GA 65, pp. 508–509].

[188] Heidegger, *Mindf*. § 70, pp. 203–204 [GA 66, pp. 229–230].

[189] The state of mind is here and elsewhere called an "attunement" (*Stimmung*).

[190] In the specific terminology of this passage, the "Ab-ground" (*Abgrund*).

[191] Because of this relation to the (groundless) ground, the state of mind of dismay is called "the grounding attunement" (*Grundstimmung*).

[192] In order to simplify things, we will note only the first possibility here. Basically speaking, the second possibility represents the absence or failure of the first, and the third possibly various modes of interrelation between the first and second.

[193] Here and elsewhere, this is called more poetically: "strife" (*Streit*).

[194] "World." (*Welt*) in more poetic language.

[195] "Earth" (*Erde*) in more poetic language.

[196] In the specific terminology of this passage, an "inceptual" (*anfänglich*) dialogue.

[197] As we shall say, this forbearance is a deliberate strategy.

[198] i.e. whether and how we forget the difference, and so forth.

The second subsection of the discussion of gods is placed under the heading: "Gods and Be-ing" (*Götter und das Seyn*). Here, Heidegger comes back frequently to the relation between the gods and the difference between Being and beings[199] and to the relation between the gods and language. With respect to the gods and Being / beings, he notes that gods cannot be considered as beings[200]—to which one might attach the notions that they are objects[201] or representations[202]—, nor as the highest being or the "above-being" (*Űber-seiende*)[203]—with which one might associate the ideas that they are transcendent[204] or infinite[205] or great[206]—but must be considered only in association with Be-ing.[207] The mistaken approaches to godhood in connection with beings are associated particularly with Plato and Christianity.[208] With respect to the gods and language, Heidegger notes that the gods come to be named by humans in their language[209]—this language being conditioned by historical usage[210] and including an unexpressed reservoir of meaning[211]—, although they should only be so named in order to raise their question-worthiness to the level of a foundational state of mind.[212] That the respective relations between the gods and Being / beings and between the gods and language must be thought together in an unspecified but intimate way is shown by Heidegger's observation in connection with the particular god described as "the last god" (*der letzte Gott*)[213] to the effect that the uniqueness of Be-ing on which he depends encompasses "the abundance of the unsaid" (*Fülle des Ungesagten*).[214]

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[199] This is frequently termed in the scholarship about Heidegger (although less frequently in Heidegger himself) the "ontological difference."

[200] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 215, 219, 220.

[201] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 220.

[202] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 213.

[203] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 213. [GA 66, p. 240].

[204] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 213.

[205] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 214.

[206] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 223. The can be said to be "great" only in the sense of their "inceptuality" (*Anfänglichkeit*) [GA 66, p. 253].

[207] For the association with Be-ing see below.

[208] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210, 214, 224.

[209] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210, 219.

[210] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210, 217.

[211] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210, 219—this aspect is indicated by the coupling of language and silence.

[212] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 219.

[213] On this "last" god see below.

[214] *MIndf*. § 71, p. 215 [GA 66, p. 244].

The second sub-section of the discussion of the gods placed under the heading: "The Gods and Be-ing" provides us with enough material to juxtapose Heidegger with Proclus at salient points. In particular, the issues of the priority of presence and of the predicative and of the relations between mediation and causality discussed earlier may be brought into clearer focus.

Any thought of the gods in terms of the priority of presence is undermined by Heidegger's exclusive reference to them in terms of the future or the past, for instance when he speaks of the dependence of the "prehistory of the grounding of the godhood of the last god" (*die Vorgeschichte der Gottschafts-gründung des letzten Gottes*) on a certain transformation of man,[215] or of the "futurality of the prehistory" (*die Zukünftigkeit dieser Vorgeschichte*) of the simultaneous grounding of godhood and *Da-sein* that is "entirely different from any kind of eschatological attitude" (*ganz anders als jede Art der 'eschatologischen' Halthung*)[216] in both cases implying not only the inseparability of future and past but the impossibility of this future-past ever becoming a present. Moreover, Heidegger explicitly denies any conception of the gods in terms of that presence called *aei* / *aeternitas* ("eternity") or *sempiternitas* ("eternal continuance") in earlier philosophy.[217] Any thought of the gods in terms of the priority of predicative language is undermined by the elaborate enactment of the dynamic relation between gods and man[218] that concludes this sub-section, in which a transition takes place from the statement "Being is Be-ing" (*das Sein ist das Seyn*) as a proposition about Being to the sway of Be-ing itself where the word "no longer persists as a statement" (*nicht mehr Aussage ... bleibt*), and in which we are transposed into a time-space where the process of naming of godhood can be accepted and yet renounced.[219] In addition, Heidegger characterizes the same dynamic relation between gods and man as "the foremost non-propositional truth" (*die erste—nicht satzmässige—Wahrheit*) of the so-called being-historical thinking underlying *Mindfulness* as a whole.[220]

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[215] *Mindf.* § 71, p. 215 [GA 66, p. 244]. There are numerous further references to the notion of a pre-history at *Mindf.* § 71, pp. 211, 213–214, etc.

[216] *Mindf.* § 71, p. 216 [GA 66, p. 245].

[217] *Mindf.* § 71, p. 223. The closely-related notion of infinity is excluded from the gods at *Mindf.* § 71, p. 214.

[218] In the specific terminology of this passage, the "mutual beholding sheltering-concealing" (*gegenblickende Verborgenheit*) of gods and man.

[219] *Mindf.* § 71, pp. 223–224 [GA 66, p. 254].

[220] *Mindf.* § 71, p. 220 [GA 66, p. 250].

Because of the foundational character of questioning itself—where the questioning can never be answered with statements—a question such as "What are the gods?" must be left in its state of tension.[221] However, certain things can be hinted at through consideration of the icon of cancelled Being that Derrida will mention in connection with his *Paradigm C* of negative theology.[222] Derrida is right to see this icon as a kind of indication of the common essentiality of Avoidance and Being, as combining the notions of a topology of earth, heaven, mortal, and divine (the four points of the cross) with that of a tension between Being and Nothing (the word itself and the superimposed cross) and with that of a gathering of the four into a one-fold (the crossing-point itself), and as an indication of the hermeneutic character of Being itself. However, he does not explain how the common essentiality of Avoidance and Being relates to the divine region of the topology. Now in the light of the section on gods in *Mindfulness*, it is possible to read the icon in more detail as an enactment of hermeneutical relations in which there is a relational tension between the relational tension of world and earth and the relational tension of gods and man,[223] in which *Da-sein* grounds and is grounded in the t/here (*Da*) of space and time,[224] and in which man and gods encounter one another by approaching the same sway of Be-ing in relations of mutual dependence characterized as need or necessity.[225] The common essentiality of Avoidance and Being can therefore be understood in terms of the gods as the flight and nearness of the latter.[226] But if a question such as "What are the gods?" must be left in its state of tension, it may seem that the detailed reading of the icon has not brought us any nearer to the divine. However, thinking of the gods' approach to the sway of Be-ing—which is itself another aspect of the tension in questioning—brings us to think the unitary-dual character of both the god(s) and the sway itself.[227]

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[221] See *Mindf*. § 71, p. 219 where, in connection with the knowing awareness associated with the enactment of the dynamic relation between gods and man, Heidegger notes that it cannot be said whether, when, and for whom the enactment will take place.

[222] Derrida, *CNPP*, pp. 589–590/*HTAS*, pp. 125–126.

[223] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 208, 213–214, 217–218, 222.

[224] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210–211, 216.

[225] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 208, 215–216, 218, 223–224.

[226] See *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210, 213–214, 218.

[227] On the uniqueness of the sway of Be-ing see *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 208–209, 213, 215, and on that of the last god *Mindf*. § 71, p. 223. The duality of the gods is indicated by the dichotomies of day / night and of flight / nearness. See *Mindf* § 71, p. 213 for the former and *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210–211, 216 for the latter.

Any thinking of the god(s)[228] in terms of mediation is only possible to the extent that the latter is understood in a manner consistent with the network of hermeneutical relations just described. Heidegger can therefore speak on the one hand, of Be-ing as positioning itself "between" (*zwischen*) gods and man in order to allow the sway of the gods and the ownmost of man to interact reciprocally in a counter-motion of approach and distancing[229] and on the other, of modern man's tendency to consider himself as a kind of cognitive "midpoint" (*Mitte*) in relation to which all things become calculable to the utmost degree,[230] the between of the first passage—which is equivalent to the unity-in-duality of the sway of Be-ing itself and therefore consistent with the hermeneutical jointure—representing the overcoming of the midpoint of the second passage.[231] Any thinking of the god(s) in terms of causality is explicitly stated to be inconsistent with the same network of hermeneutical relations. Heidegger does indeed speak of various dynamic relations—of more complex dynamic relations of making dependent[232] such as that of *Da-sein* to the relations between Truth and Be-ing, between gods and man,[233] and between time and space,[234] of less complex dynamic relations of making dependent[235] such as that of the gods to man or *Da-sein*,[236] and of Be-ing to the gods,[237] and to man,[238] and of less complex relations of becoming dependent[239] such as that of the gods to Being.[240] However, these hermeneutical dynamic relations falling on the side of

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[228] At *Mindf*. § 71, p. 219 the plurality implied by the name "gods" is said to refer to the empty site of the indeterminateness of godhood resulting from man's lack of attunement i.e. to the sway of Be-ing.

[229] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 219 [GA 66, p. 248]. This counter-motion is described here as a resonating in mutual beholding and at *Mindf*. § 71, p. 222 as a resonating play-space. See also *Mindf*. § 71, p. 217.

[230] *MIndf*. § 71, p. 220 [GA 66, p. 250].

[231] Although Heidegger does not draw this conclusion explicitly here, the midpoint of modern man's calculative existence would correspond to a kind of "thirdness."

[232] He calls these "grounding" [*Gründung*]. Among these complex dynamic relations, grounding is peculiar in that it is *a*. associated primarily with *Da-sein*, and *b*. is simultaneously self-directed.

[233] See *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 216–217.

[234] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 218. Grounding applies particularly to the complex sets of relations called attunements. See *Mindf*. § 71, p. 209.

[235] These are called "necessitating" (*ernötigen*).

[236] See *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 208, 211, 214.

[237] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 211, 213.

[238] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 218—stated here as the Abground's relation to man.

[239] Heidegger calls these "needing" (*benötigen*).

[240] *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 214–215, 224.

Be-ing are explicitly differentiated from the causal dynamic relations falling on the side of beings. As Heidegger concludes, it is not the case either that the gods create man or that man invents gods but rather that the Truth of Be-ing, by enowning itself between them and enowning each to the other, decides on both.[241]

[241] *Mindf*. § 71, p. 208. Cf. *Mindf*. § 71, pp. 210, 214, 224 for denials of the creative God of Christianity.

2.2. PRAYER(S)

Pseudo-Dionysius

The textual encounter between Jacques Derrida and Christian Neoplatonism is one in which, rather conveniently, Derrida's own writing on the latter can form an appropriate starting-point. Derrida's interest in thinkers such as Pseudo-Dionysius and Meister Eckhart is demonstrated most clearly in several works published between 1987 and 1993: especially the lecture "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations," originally delivered in English at Jerusalem and then reworked for publication in French in the volume *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre*,[1] and also the booklet *Sauf le Nom*, published at the same time as and intended to be read together with two other booklets on related topics.[2] Since it is probably more important for the purpose of illuminating this textual relation, we shall concentrate our attention on the earlier publication. However, both texts show that Derrida's interest is aroused by two aspects of Christian Neoplatonism: its association with a metaphysical doctrine that typifies the so-called "metaphysics of presence" identified by Heidegger as the dominant tradition in western thought;[3] and its emphasis on the "negative theology" often superficially identified with deconstruction by modern critics to the latter.

The essay "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" is divided into two main parts. In the first part of the text, Derrida undertakes a general discussion of "negative theology"—a topic which he had addressed obliquely for many years but never examined in a thorough and continuous way. This general discussion sets out to explain the fundamental differences between negative theology and deconstruction, and especially the determination of Being by the temporal dimension of presence assumed by the former but rejected by the latter. In the second part of his text, Derrida explains that the issue of negative theology needs to be approached through the study of individual

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[1] Paris: Galilée, 1987, pp. 535–595.

[2] Paris: Galilée, 1993. The other booklets are entitled: *Passions* and *Khōra*.

[3] The problem of "metaphysics of presence" is virtually the same as the problem of "onto-theology." On these questions in relation to Derrida see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. ix–xiii, 2–4, 6, 16–18, 23–24, 36, 62, 104, 173 and chapter 2.1, notes 26 and 33 and pp. 37–42 of the present volume.

cases rather than the formulation of general theories. He therefore embarks on the study of what he terms three "paradigms" of negative theology: *A*. Plato's notions of the Good and *Khōra*, *B*. The Christian theology of Dionysius the Areopagite and Meister Eckhart, and *C*. Heidegger's notions of Being and Nothing.

In the second part of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," Derrida interprets passages from pseudo-Dionysius' works—especially *De Divinis Nominibus* ("On Divine Names") and *De Mystica Theologia* ("On Mystical Theology")—in combination with two of Meister Eckhart's German sermons—Sermon 9 *Quasi stella matutina* ("As a morning-star") and Sermon 83 *Renovamini spiritu* ("Be renewed in your spirit").[4] Although the deconstructive approach strictly speaking eschews the thematic, we may perhaps provisionally summarize the intertextual development as follows. Within the context formed by the relation between man (woman) and God[5] and with an implicit emphasis on the dialectical relation between affirmative and negative divine attributes, Derrida first discusses the Dionysian treatment of prayer. According to his reading, prayer has among its most important characteristics that it represents a movement towards God as transcendent Other, that it is a discourse implementing a non-discursive mode of thinking and establishing its own referent,[6] and that it embodies a relation towards a future which can never be present. The *dialectical* relation between affirmation and negation—constituting a certain "place"—forms a quasi-thematic link between Dionysius and Eckhart. According to Derrida, the latter's sermons exploit the notion of a multiplication of voices which is simultaneously the affirmation and negation of a divine attribute and the directness and indirectness of the discourse about the divine. Moreover, the relation between the text's voices appears in the mode of a supplement which is both external and internal to that of which it is a supplement, as an adverb relates

[4] Derrida's citations of Dionysius are via the French translation: *Oeuvres complètes de Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite*, traduction de Maurice de Gandillac (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1943), his citations of Eckhart via the French translation: *Maître Eckhart, Sermons*, introduction et traduction de Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache (Paris: Seuil, 1974–1979). Where appropriate, we will expand these into citations of the modern critical editions: *Corpus Dionysiacum* I–II, herausgegeben von Beate Regina Suchla, Günter Heil, und Adolf Martin Ritter (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990–1991), and *Meister Eckhart, Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke*, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936–).

[5] As represented by the personal pronoun "He" or "She." Cf. note 7.

[6] These are the normal features of a "performative" utterance as understood by Derrida. On performativity in Derrida see p. 152 and the references given in chapter 2.4, notes 208–212.

to a word. At this point, Derrida revisits his earlier discussion. He examines the Dionysian treatment of prayer now within the context formed by the relations between the first person, the second person, and God[7] and with an implicit emphasis on the dialectical mode of affirmative divine attribution. According to this re-reading, prayer combines the characteristics of representing a movement towards God as transcendent Other, of implementing a non-discursive mode of thinking and establishing its own referent, and of embodying a relation towards the future which can never be present with the simultaneity of direct and indirect discourse about the divine The *apostrophic* relations between the first person, the second person, and God—also constituting a certain "place"—form a quasi-thematic link between Dionysius and Eckhart. According to Derrida, the latter's sermons exploit the notion that the human soul when denuded of its images can unite through a certain internal power not only with another human soul similarly disposed but with the transcendent God who is without Form. Moreover, the soul's internal power can be compared both with a receptacle which may or may not contain forms, and with a sieve which can discriminate within the plethora of incoming impressions. In the midst of his textual encounter with Dionysius and Eckhart, it is possible to detect a collateral reading by Derrida of several other writers. These include Heidegger for the association of a movement towards the transcendent and the negative divine attributes,[8] and Plato for the notion of *khōra* here identified with the receptive function of the soul's internal power.[9]

As stated in the summary above, Derrida's first discussion of pseudo-Dionysius is devoted to the question of prayer. He begins this by quoting or

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[7] As represented by the personal pronouns "I," "You," and "He."

[8] There is also a reading of Heidegger for the association of ontological difference and the soul's discriminative power. Derrida almost invariably reads Platonic (Neoplatonic) philosophy—of which Dionysius and Eckhart are outstanding representatives—through the lens of Heidegger's thinking, not only because of certain structural similarities between the two approaches but because he views Heidegger as embodying a kind of concealed "Platonism." See Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 29–41. Given that Heidegger himself quoted Eckhart in his *Habilationsschrift* and in his inaugural lecture of 1915, and also strikingly echoes his notions of detachment and of the ground of the soul, Derrida's coupling of the two German writers is particularly effective. On Dionysius and Heidegger, see Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God. Heidegger and the Areopagite*, translation by H. Ventis, (London-New York: T. and T. Clark, 2005), and on Eckhart and Heidegger see John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1978). With respect to historical questions, at least, Caputo's is the more reliable work.

[9] It should also be noted that Derrida's discussion of the relations between the first person, the second person, and God suggests certain connections with Levinas' writings.

paraphrasing a number of passages from Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus*, chapter 4 in which the metaphysical relation between God and man forming the context of prayer is shown to have a kind of dialectical structure. As Derrida notes, "And in Dionysius' works, for example, the Trinitarian schema appears absolutely indispensable to ensure the passage through or crossing between discourses on the divine names, between the symbolic and mystical theology."[10] This passage or crossing implies that God himself is denoted by affirmative and by negative terms, the negative terms signifying not deficiency but excess of the corresponding affirmative terms, and the excess signifying both what surpasses and what maximizes the latter.[11] According to Derrida citing Dionysius on this point, "But if the Good transcends all being, as is in effect the case, then it is necessary to say that it is the formless that gives form, and that the principle which remains in itself without essence is the height of essence, and the reality without life the supreme life."[12] Now causal relations are implied not only between what is denoted by the negative and affirmative terms respectively—although Derrida does not extract an explanation of this from his source—but also between God and man (or woman). The latter relation can be viewed as "an entire erotics" (*toute une érotique*), provided that one employs the term *erōs* with respect to its intentional meaning rather than its verbal form.[13] Derrida is here focusing on the notion of circularity implied in the love which God extends towards his creation and the love which the creature returns to God, contrasting the motion which leads back to the Good with the motion that leads towards Evil.[14] Regarding the motion to the Good he notes in paraphrase of Dionysius that "this erotics leads forward and therefore backward towards the Good, circularly, that is towards 'what is situated far beyond both being considered in itself and non-being.'"[15] Regarding the motion to Evil, he cites Dionysius

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[10] Derrida, *Comment ne pas parler*, p. 571 *Et le schème trinitaire paraît absolument indispensable, chez Denys par exemple, pour assurer le passage ou le croisement entre les discours sur les noms divins, la théologie symbolique et la théologie mystique*.

[11] *CNPP*, p. 571, paraphrasing Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus* 4. 6, 701AB (150. 1–14).

[12] Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus* 4. 3, 697A (146. 6–8) *ei de kai huper panta ta onta estin, hōsper oun esti, tagathon, kai to aneideon eidopoiei. kai en autōi monōi kai to anousion ousias huperbolē kai to azōon huperechousa zōē*.

[13] *CNPP*, p. 571, paraphrasing *DN* 4. 11, 708B–4. 12, 709B (156. 1–157. 17). Derrida further quotes Dionysius' appeal to sacred authorities such as the divine Ignatius for the application of *erōs* to God at *DN* 4. 11, 709A–4. 12, 709B (157. 4–17).

[14] Dionysius, *DN*, 4. 13, 712A ff. (159. 9 ff.)

[15] *CNPP*, p. 571 *cette érotique conduit et reconduit donc au Bien, circulairement, c'est-à-dire vers ce qui 'se situe fort au-delà de l'être considéré en soi et du non-être.'* Cf. Dionysius, *DN*

to the effect that evil "belongs neither to Being nor to non-Being but is more separated from the Good than is non-Being itself, being of an other nature and more deprived of essence than is non-Being itself."[16] Derrida concludes his sequence of quotations and paraphrases by noting that one could draw the full consequences of this "singular axiomatics" (*singulière axiomatique*), but that this is not his concern at the moment.

For Derrida reading Dionysius, prayer is "an act of language" (*acte de langage*)[17]—even if silent—having four important features.[18] *1. It represents a movement to God as transcendent Other*. Derrida describes prayer as a "passage, transfer, translation" (*passage, transfert, traduction*) between the "theological movement that speaks and is inspired by the Good" (*mouvement théologique qui parle et s'inspire du Bien*) and the "apophatic path that exceeds the Good" (*voie apophatique qui excède le Bien*) or the "apophasis towards excellence" (*apophase vers l'excellence*).[19] That the movement is not simply to God but to God as transcendent Other emerges from Derrida's description of feature *2. 2. It implements a non-discursive mode of thinking*.[20] According to Derrida, prayer is a linguistic act or experience which is "not predicative, theoretical (theo*logical*), or constative" (*prédicatif, théorique* (*théo*logique). *ou constatif*). This is because it implies simply a "supplicating address to the Other as other … without any other determination" (*adresse demandant à l'autre … comme autre … sans aucune autre détermination*).[21]

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4. 19, 716D (163. 23–164. 1) *to men oun agathon estai kai tou haplōs ontos kai tou mē ontos pollōi proteron huperidromenon*.

[16] *CNPP*, p. 571 *il n'appartient ni à l'être niau non-être, mais il est plus séparé du Bien que le non-être même, étant d'une autre nature et plus que lui privé de l'essence* and Dionysius, *DN* 4. 19, 716D (164. 1–3) *oute en tois ousin oute en tois mē ousin, alla kai autou tou mē ontos mallon allotrion apechon tagathou kai anousiōteron*.

[17] *CNPP*, p. 572. Derrida also characterizes prayer as an "experience" (*expérience*) (*CNPP*, pp. 571–572).

[18] These four features of prayer correspond to four aspects of the deconstructive method. See the discussion on pp. 84–85 and n. 47.

[19] *CNPP*, pp. 571–572.

[20] Derrida here seems to envision two kinds of the non-discursive thinking: *i.* requests/commands, and *ii.* self-contradictions, which are similar in eluding the structure of propositional logic. In connection with *i*, Derrida inserts at this point a discussion of the difference between *a.* "prayer" (*prière*) and "encomium" (*louange*) because Jean-Luc Marion in his work *L'idole et la distance* (Paris: Grasset, 1977), p. 232 had attempted to treat these two forms of religious utterance as equally non-predicative. According to Derrida's stricter usage, prayer simply addresses the Other and is "absolutely non-predicative" (*absolument anté-prédicative*)—therefore incapable of being true or false—whereas encomium by naming what is "preserves the structure of a predicative affirmation" (*garde … la structure d'une affirmation prédicative*). See the lengthy note at *CNPP*, p. 572.

[21] *CNPP*, p. 572.

In doing this, it will exhibit one of the main characteristics of *performative* utterances as understood by Derrida: non-predicative or propositional form and consequent incapability of being true or false.[22] *3. It establishes its own referent*. According to Derrida, prayer is a linguistic act or experience which prevents the apophatic movement from "manipulating its negations as though empty and purely mechanical phrases" (*manipuler ses négations comme des discours vides et purement mécaniques*) and adjusts "the passage through the desert of discourse and the apparent referential vacuity" (*le passage par le désert du discours, l'apparente vacuité référentielle*).[23] It can do this, having exhibited another of the main characteristics of *performative* utterances as understood by Derrida: the identity between what is stated and what is accomplished by the linguistic act.[24] *4. It represents a relation to the future which can never be present*. Derrida describes prayer as a request to the Other "to give the promise of his presence as other, and finally the transcendence of his otherness itself" (*de donner la promesse de sa présence comme autre, et finalement la transcendance de son altérité même*).[25] That the relation is not simply to the future but to the future that can never be present is suggested by Derrida's description of feature *2*.[26]

Having explained in a general way the salient features of prayer, Derrida now outlines a notion of place (*lieu*) as union in order to illustrate some of them. He returns to Dionysius and explains an important passage in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chapter 3[27] as follows:

> Dionysius proposes to his immediate addressee—or to the one to whom he dedicates his work, Timothy—to examine the name of Good, which expresses divinity, *after* having invoked the Trinity, that principle of good that transcends all goods. It is necessary to pray in order to *approach* it, "most intimately"—that is to raise oneself towards it—and receive from it the initiation of its gifts[28]

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[22] Derrida refers to the "performative dimension" (*dimension performative*) of prayer at *CNPP*, p. 572, noting that the detailed analysis of this aspect is a task too demanding to pursue at this point.

[23] *CNPP*, pp. 571–572.

[24] See note 23.

[25] *CNPP*, p. 572.

[26] It will also be stated explicitly in his second discussion of Dionysius.

[27] Dionysius, *DN* 3. 1, 680B (138. 1–12).

[28] *CNPP*, p. 575 *Denys propose à son destinataire ou dédicataire immédiat, Timothée, d'examiner le nom de Bien, qui exprime la divinité*, après *avoir invoqué la Trinité, ce principe du bien qui transcende rous les biens. Il faut prier pour* s'approcher *d'elle, 'au plus près,'—c'est-à-dire s'élever vers elle—et recevoir d'elle l'initiation de ses dons*.

According to Derrida's reading, this passage shows that Dionysius' prayer is a movement to God as transcendent Other in that it is through this discourse that we *approach* the Trinity which transcends all goods. It also shows that the Dionysian prayer implements a mode of non-discursive thinking (an aspect of performativity) in that we address the Trinity before examining the name of Good which expresses it.[29]

Derrida now explains the continuation of the passage in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chapter 3[30] by observing that

> By a series of analogies, Dionysius then explains that, in approaching and elevating ourselves thus, we do not traverse the distance that separates us from a place (since the residence of the Trinity is not localized: it is "everywhere and nowhere"). On the other hand, the Trinity draws us towards it, while it remains immobile, like the height of the sky or the depth of marine bedrock from which we will pull on a rope in order to come to it, and not to draw it towards us[31]

According to Derrida's reading, this passage shows that Dionysius' prayer implements a mode of non-discursive thinking in that the Trinity is in a self-contradictory manner *everywhere and nowhere*.[32] It also shows that the Dionysian prayer establishes its own referent (another aspect of performativity) in that the drawing of God towards us is identical with our coming to God.

Derrida's second discussion of Dionysius follows on his first discussion of Eckhart. The last point made in the Eckhartian discussion—that according to this writer the supplementary character of the sermon must be oriented by the prayer to the divinity—leads Derrida to interpret further passages in Dionysius' *De Mystica Theologia* and *De Divinis Nominibus*. He begins by quoting the prayer which opens the former treatise:[33]

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[29] With respect to this passage, one should note: *i.* that non-discursive thinking in the sense of address to the Other occurs in two forms: i.e. address to God, and address to Timothy; *ii.* that non-discursive thinking in the sense of address to the Other can be contrasted with non-discursive thinking in the sense of contradictory thinking. For more on these distinctions see below.

[30] Dionysius, *DN* 3. 1, 680CD (138. 13–139. 16).

[31] *CNPP*, p. 575 *Par une série d'analogies, Denys explique alors qu'en nous rapprochant et en nous élevant ainsi nous ne parcourons pas la distance qui nous sépare d'un lieu* (*puisque la résidence de la Trinité n'est pas locale: elle est 'partout et nulle part'*) *et que, d'autre part, … la Trinité nous attire vers elle, qui reste, immobile, comme la hauteur du ciel ou la pierre du rocher marin depuis laquelle nous tirerions sur une corde pour venir à elle et non pour l'attirer vers nous.*

[32] See note 29.

[33] *CNPP*, pp. 578–579.

> O Trinity beyond being, beyond divinity, beyond goodness, guide of Christians in divine wisdom, steer us to the highest summit of the mystical scriptures beyond unknowing and beyond light. There the simple, absolute, and incorruptible mysteries of theology lie hidden in the darkness beyond light of the hidden mystical silence. In that greatest darkness, they cast overwhelming light on what is most manifest, and in the wholly intangible and unseen, they fill our sightless intellects with splendors beyond beauty. Let that be my prayer. And you, dear Timothy, in your unremitting pursuit of mystical contemplation, leave behind all sensation …[34]

Derrida's commentary on this prayer applies a certain principle of the multiplication of voices to the different features of prayer explored in his first discussion of Dionysius, thereby shifting the entire meaning of prayer into the hermeneutic register. He begins by specifying the first feature of prayer—movement to God as transcendent Other—as *movement to God and to our neighbor as readers of texts*. Derrida notes that the address of Dionysius to God is also the address of Dionysius to Timothy—since Dionysius immediately quotes his own prayer to the latter—, and that the address to Timothy as reader is also an address to any other reader—since Derrida notes his own quotation of Dionysius' quotation.[35] Derrida here emphasizes with liberal use of italics that one can "pass from one address to the other without changing direction" (*passer d'une adresse à l'autre sans changer de direction*), that "the spacing of this apostrophe *turns aside* the discourse in the *same* direction" (*l'espacement de cette apostrophe* détourne *le discours dans la* même *direction*), and that the prayer, its quotation, and the *apostrophe* "thus weave the *same* text, however heterogeneous they appear" (*tissent ainsi le* même *texte, si hétérogènes qu'elles paraissent*).[36] Derrida continues

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[34] Dionysius, *De Mystica Theologia* 1. 1, 997AB (141. 3–142. 5) *Trias huperousie kai huperthee kai huperagathe, tēs Christianōn ephore theosophias, ithunon hēmas epi tēn tōn mustikōn logiōn huperagnōston kai huperphaē kai akrotatēn koruphēn. entha ta hapla kai apoluta kai atrepta tēs theologias mustēria kata ton huperphōton enkekaluptai tēs kruphiomustou sigēs gnophon, en tōi skoteinotatōi to huperphanestaton huperlamponta kai en tōi pampan anaphei kai aopatōi tōn huperkalōn aglaiōn huperplērounta tous anommatous noas. emoi men oun tauta ēuchthō. su de, ō phile Timothee, tēi peri ta mustika theamata suntonōi diatribēi kai tas aisthēseis apoleipe* … Derrida's text of Dionysius obviously differed in some details from the critical edition quoted and translated here.

[35] In describing the non-discursive aspect of prayer, Derrida had spoken of the other as other as "God, for example" (*Dieu par exemple*), in other words any "you" whether metaphysically transcendent or merely *quasi*-transcendent. See *CNPP*, p. 572.

[36] *CNPP*, p. 579. The apostrophe here means the transition between text and quotation, and between one address and another. In a lengthy note (*CNPP*, p. 580, n. 1) Derrida explains that his principles of repetition and supplement are at work here. He also notes the relation between Dionysius and Hierotheos as analogous with that between Timothy and Dionysius. Cf. Dionysius, *DN* 3. 2, 681A–C (139. 17–140. 20).

by shifting into the hermeneutic register another feature of prayer—relation to the future which can never be present. He explains that the apostrophe can exhibit such paradoxical multiplication because the address is to Timothy or to ourselves "not to us as we are, at present, but as we would have to be" (*non pas à tels que nous sommes, présentement … mais tels que nous devrions être*), because the place of the apostrophe "comes from the future of what is promised" (*s'institue depuis l'avenir de ce qui est promis*), and because the latter "is the place only after what will have taken place" (*il n'est le lieu que depuis ce qui aura eu lieu*).[37] The relation to the future is emphasized by a passage from Dionysius' *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* which Derrida cites at this point,[38] and the hermeneutic character of this relation by the replacement of the present by the future perfect tense.[39] Derrida continues by specifying the first feature of prayer—movement to God as transcendent Other—as *movement to God as writer of texts*. He notes that the passage, transfer, or translation mentioned earlier between the theological movement that speaks the Good and the apophatic path that exceeds the Good is found in a written text as the relation between "what God himself has imparted as befitting his goodness" in the sacred writings and the avoidance of "speaking or thinking anything besides what the Holy Scriptures have divinely revealed to us."[40] Recognition of the transcendent otherness embodied in the scriptural text read by Dionysius is indicated by Derrida's remark that the Holy Scriptures are "the archi-text before all supplementary 'adjunction'" (*l'architexte avant toute 'adjonction' supplémentaire*).[41] Applications of the principle of multiplication of voices to the different features of prayer lead Derrida throughout this discussion to focus on Dionysius'

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[37] *CNPP*, pp. 579–581. Into the complex discussion at this point, Derrida introduces with respect to the "Dionysian" place of apostrophe *a.* a contrast with Plato's *khōra* in that the place "is brought into motion … *initiated*" (*se met en mouvement … s'*initie); and *b.*an identification with Heidegger's *Ereignis* in that the place corresponds to an "event of the promise" (*l'événement de cette promesse*). These two references recall the "paradigm A" and "paradigm C" respectively of *Comment ne pas parler*.

[38] Dionysius, *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* 5. 5, 512CD (112. 15–17). Derrida silently converts Dionysius' figure of Jerusalem from signifying the Christian future of presence to signifying a more Judaic future of futurity. Thus, at *CNPP*, p. 581 he notes that the place that is revealed "remains the place of waiting" (*reste le lieu de l'attente*).

[39] Here as elsewhere in Derrida, the continuous "physical" conception of time as arrow (past→future) is replaced by a disjunct "hermeneutic" notion of time as tense (future+past/present).

[40] Dionysius, *DN* 1. 2, 588C (110. 2–5) *eipein oute mēn ennoēsai ti para ta theoeidōs hēmin ek tōn hierōn logiōn ekpephasmena … hōs autē … agathoprepōs paradedōken*.

[41] *CNPP*, p. 581.

reference to the seal: a unique figure which implies address to the other, the future, and the duality of revealing and withholding all at once.[42]

These two explorations of Pseudo-Dionysius' writing have shown Derrida to be implementing a complex strategy of reading without stating its nature formally. In fact, this strategy can be understood as having been twofold. On the one hand, it has deconstructed the text of negative theology by inverting and also not inverting the asymmetrical contradictories which it embodies.[43] On the other hand, it has shown the degree to which the methods of negative theology and of deconstruction can be placed in parallel with one another.[44] The backdrop against which this twofold strategy has been pursued is the distance which remains between a late ancient author working in the tradition of Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysical thinking and the modern project of writing in the aftermath of Heidegger's critique of onto-theology.[45] Indeed, Derrida prefaces his statement of the four features of prayer suggested by *De Divinis Nominibus* by observing that, between the experience of *khōra* in Plato and the Christian negative theologies "an anthropo-theologicalization … seems to dominate anew, even closer to the *agathon* than to the *khōra*" (*une anthropo-théologization … semble de nouveau commander, plus proche encore de l'*agathon *que de la* khōra).[46] In other words, Dionysius' interpretation of negative theology continues to treat what is above being as the maximal being of traditional Platonism—represented by the Idea of the Good in the *Republic*—rather than as the other than being sought by deconstruction—anticipated in the Receptacle of the *Timaeus*. We must now consider Derrida's strategy in a more formal way. Here, the discussion of prayer as a movement to God as

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[42] *CNPP*, pp. 581–582 (quoting Dionysius, *DN*, 2. 5–6, 644AB (129. 7–15)). Derrida describes this *sphragis* as "what figures the figuration of the unfigurable" (*figure la figuration de l'infigurable*) and connects it both with the Platonic paradigms—as in Dionysius—and the Platonic *khōra*. This associates the present discussion with the two aspects of "paradigm A" in *Comment ne pas parler*.

[43] In what follows, we shall often speak simply of the inversion characteristic of the deconstructive method, although a non-inversion is always to be understood as a concomitant element.

[44] There is also a third component in Derrida's strategy which has been formally stated: namely, the juxtaposition of different "paradigms" of negative theology. See above pp. 10–11 and 30.

[45] See Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God. Heidegger and the Areopagite* for a discussion of this relation. Unfortunately, its true nature and its philosophical decisiveness are obscured by this author's tendency to separate Dionysius from the non-Christian Platonic context in which he wrote.

[46] *CNPP*, pp. 570–571.

transcendent Other may perhaps be selected as the most potent example of the deconstruction of the text of negative theology.[47] The discussion of prayer as a linguistic act establishing its own referent may perhaps be chosen as the most striking instance of parallelism between negative theology and deconstruction.[48] In both cases, we will test Derrida's theory-practice to destruction by attempting to extend it into a more precise reading of the text of philosophy.

Given that Derrida describes the movement to God as transcendent Other which prayer represents as a transfer between the affirmative and negative methods of speaking about God, he seems to be interpreting the Dionysian concept less in terms of the traditional Platonic doctrine in which the human soul's movement towards transcendence must be distinguished from the transcendence itself of Unity or Being and where unity is prior cause of duality—which would maintain the asymmetrical contradiction: *transcendent God* > *non-transcendent human*—, than in terms of the position of Heidegger's followers in which *Dasein*'s movement towards transcendence can be distinguished only hermeneutically from the transcendence itself of Difference, Being, or Thinking and where unity and duality are equally primordial—amounting to a reversal of the said asymmetrical contradictories.[49] However, there are passages in Dionysius' own writings which point in the direction of this deconstruction of negative theology.

First, we should consider some passages in *De Divinis Nominibus*.[50] When Dionysius sometimes negates and sometimes affirms a divine name *x* in the

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[47] The deconstruction of negative theology in the passages summarized earlier proceeds by inverting various pairs of asymmetrical contradictories. The most important of these are undoubtedly: transcendent God > non-transcendent human (as in feature *1* of prayer), predicative discourse > non-predicative discourse (as in feature *2* of prayer), essence interpreted > interpretation without essence (as in feature *3* of prayer), and non-temporality > temporality (as in feature *4* of prayer).

[48] Given the performative nature of deconstruction, the deconstruction of negative theology cannot be separated completely from the parallelism between negative theology and deconstruction. However, one can consider Derrida's reading of his source predominantly from either the one side or the other for expository convenience.

[49] Derrida has described the use of an intertext in the process of deconstruction as a "graft" of a new text which follows the "castration" of the original material.

[50] For more detailed analysis of the metaphysical system implicit in Dionysius' doctrine of divine names and of the position of this system within the history of late ancient Platonism, see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, pp. 152–181, Sarah Klitenic Wear and John Dillon, *Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neoplatonist Tradition. Despoiling the Hellenes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 15–50, and Stephen Gersh, "Dionysius' *On Divine Names* Revisited. A Structural Analysis," in *Dionysius* 28 (2010), pp. 77–96.

context of his emanative metaphysics, he means that God is to be identified simultaneously with both a transcendent property or substance denoted by *non-x* (or *above-x*) and a non-transcendent property denoted by *x*. This thesis is stated in an abstract manner in chapter 1, where the author observes that theologians on the one hand call God "nameless" (*anōnumos*) because of his "name above every name" (*to huper pan onoma*), and on the other hand "many-named" (*poluōnumos*), because he is praised "from all things caused" (*ek pantōn tōn aitiatōn*).[51] Moreover, Dionysius makes abundantly clear that it is the selfsame God that is "simultaneously in himself, and in the world … being all things and no thing" (*kai hama en tautōi ton auton … panta ta onta kai ouden tōn ontōn*). God's identity with both the transcendent and immanent terms is further explored in Dionysius' discussion of the name "One" in chapter 13 where God is shown to be both above and within the *oppositions* of unity and multiplicity and whole and part.[52] A similar situation emerges in Dionysius' discussion of pairs of names in chapter 9 where God is found to be both above and within the oppositions of "Great" and "Small," of "Same" and "Different," of "Similar" and "Dissimilar," and of "Rest" and "Motion."[53]

Elsewhere, Dionysius sometimes negates and sometimes affirms a divine name *x* in the context of his emanative system, but now means that God is to be identified with a transcendent property or substance denoted by *non-x* (or *above-x*), identified with a mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance denoted by *x-in-itself*, and contrasted with a non-transcendent property denoted by *x* This thesis permits the identification of the Platonic Forms—here called "paradigms" (*paradeigmata*) in philosophical terminology but "predestinations" (*proorismoi*) or "wills" (*thelēmata*) in more theological language[54]—with the mediating transcen-

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[51] Dionysius, *DN* 1. 6, 596A–C (118. 2–119. 9). The argument is restated in *DN* 1. 7, 596C–597A (119. 10–120. 8). On the significance of the *oppositions* mentioned here see the discussion of *De Mystica Theologia* below.

[52] *DN* 13. 2, 977C–13. 3, 980C (227. 6–229. 5). Oppositions of definite and indefinite, and of limit and unlimited are also mentioned.

[53] *DN* 9. 1, 909B–9. 9, 917A (207. 6–214. 8). "Equality" is also mentioned (without its opposite). The divine names discussed in this passage and the previously cited passage are among the most obviously "philosophical" in *DN*, recalling Plato's dialogues *Parmenides* and *Sophist* respectively.

[54] *DN* 5. 8, 824C–825A (188. 6–189. 6)—the wills are, of course, God's. Dionysius notes that the first terminology refers suitably to what are "most primordial among beings" (*ta en tois ousin archēgikōtera*)—being so employed by Clement [of Alexandria]—but obscures the ultimate causality of God himself. For this reason, the second terminology is preferred by Christians.

dent and non-transcendent term. Dionysius applies negative and affirmative names to God in this manner in his discussion of "Being" and "Life" in chapter 6 where God is identified with the mediating term as "Being-in-Itself" (*to autoeinai*) and "Life in Itself" (*hē autozōē*), and in his discussions of "Being" and "Life" and of "Good" and "Beauty" in chapter 11.[55] In the latter discussion, he explains the naming of God on the one hand as "Life-in-Itself" (*hē autozōē*) and on the other as "the cause of Life-in-Itself" (*tēs autozōēs hupostatēs*)—or of God on the one hand as "Good-in-Itself" (*autoagathotēs*) and on the other as "above the Good" (*huperagathos*)—as constituting a naming of God in the first instance "with reference to his being participated" (*phamen … methektōs*) and in the second "with reference to his being primal" (*phamen … archikōs*).[56] The same thesis also permits the identification of the three terms "unparticipated" (*amethekton*), "participated" (*metechomenon, metochē*), and "participating" (*metechon*)—a structure which introduces a doubling into the Platonic Forms—with the transcendent, mediating transcendent and non-transcendent, and non-transcendent term respectively.[57] Dionysius applies negative and affirmative terms to God in this manner in his discussion of "Holy of Holies" and similar examples of the "doubling of names" (*diplasiasmos tōn onomatōn*).[58]

Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus* therefore formulates the relation between the affirmation and the negation of a divine name *x* in two distinct ways. That these two formulations must be employed not separately but in combination in order to achieve an adequate understanding of the nature of God and his relation to creation is shown first, by the fact that the same names are often subjected to both formulations and secondly, by the fact that the first formulation often turns into the second with respect to the same names. Thus, Dionysius' abstract statement of the first formulation continues on the one hand, with an enumeration of names including the "Being," "Life," and "Holy of Holies" which later exemplify the second

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[55] *DN* 6. 1, 856BC (191. 1–8).

[56] *DN* 11. 6, 953B–956B (221. 13–223. 14). In introducing a certain duality into the Platonic Forms, Dionysius anticipates an approach—clearly developed under the influence of Neo-Kantian readings of Plato—which is found in Heidegger. See Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, translated by Ted Sadler, London-New York: Continuum 2002, §§ 6–9, pp. 42–53. If the hermeneutic character of this duality emphasized in the parallel references to the Forms in *De Mystica Theologia* is taken into account, the proximity between the discussions of the same topic by Dionysius and Heidegger becomes even more difficult to ignore. See n. 45.

[57] *DN* 11. 6, 956AB (223. 4–14) and 12. 4, 972. AB (225. 14–226. 5).

[58] *DN* 12. 1–4, 969A–972B (224. 1–226. 5).

formulation[59] and on the other, with the remark that "Goodness" not only causes all things but "has pre-contained them in itself" (*en heautēi … proeilēphe*).[60] Now the structural relations within and between these formulations clearly depend on intellectual rather than real differences and on coincidences of opposites rather than logically distinct opposites.[61] When discussing the name "Intellect," Dionysius relates the first formulation to human knowledge by arguing that the identification of God with the transcendent property or substance represents a "knowing through unknowing" (*ginōskesthai dia agnōsias*), and his identification with the immanent property a "knowing through knowing" (*dia gnōseos ginōskesthai*).[62] A few lines before, the simultaneity of contradictories with respect to divine knowledge—which human knowledge imitates—had been exemplified by light which "has causally pre-contained the knowledge of darkness in itself, not knowing darkness from any source other than light" (*kat'aitian en heautōi tēn eidēsin tou skotous proeilēphen ouk allothen eidōs to skotos ē apo tou phōtos*).[63] We can see some important further developments if we turn to another treatise by Dionysius.

Dionysius himself explains that the theological method of *De Divinis Nominibus* is primarily that of applying affirmations to God and descending from most primary to least primary, more similar to God to less similar to God, and most unified to least unified, whereas the method of *De Mystica Theologia* is primarily that of applying negations to God and ascending from least primary to most primary, less similar to God to more similar to God, and least unified to most unified.[64] According to the philos-

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[59] *DN* 1. 6, 596AB (118. 11–119. 5).

[60] *DN* 1. 7, 596D–597A (120. 3–8). Since Goodness is specified as "the above-named" (*huperōnumos*), Dionysius is clearly referring to God's transcendent rather than immanent containment here. When using the second formulation of the relation between the affirmation and negation of divine names at *DN* 5. 8, 824C (188. 3), Dionysius expresses the relation between God and the paradigms with the same verb "pre-contain."

[61] These points become clearer in *De Mystica Theologia*—as we shall see.

[62] *DN* 7. 3, 869C–872A (197. 17–198. 11).

[63] *DN* 7. 2, 869AB (196. 17–197. 2). The most important passage denying the principle of non-contradiction with respect to divine knowledge occurs in the discussion of the divine name "Sameness" at *DN* 9. 4, 912C (210. 4–6). Here, God "in himself pre-contains even opposites in the mode of sameness according to his single and unified causality which exceeds all sameness" (*en heautōi kai ta enantia tautōs proechon kata tēn mian kai henikēn tēs holēs tautotētos huperechousan aitian*).

[64] See Dionysius, *MT* 3, 1033C (147. 10–14) for the contrast between the two treatises, *MT* 2, 1025B (145. 7–14) for the order of primacy, *MT* 3. 1033BC (147. 7–10) for that of multiplicity, and *MT* 3, 1033CD (147. 15–21) for that of similarity.

ophy of late ancient Platonism, this means that the former treatise deals objectively and subjectively with the "procession" (*proodos*) of all things from the One or Good, whereas the latter deals objectively and subjectively with the "reversion" (*epistrophē*) of all things to that cause.[65] These statements help to explain two especially noteworthy features of the discussion in *De Mystica Theologia*: first, the emphasis on prayer as the vehicle of the relation between the affirmation and the negation of divine name *x*—since prayer is associated with reversion—and secondly, the treatment of the relation between the affirmation and negation of divine name *x* in terms of the coincidence of opposites[66]—since reversion involves the overcoming of distinctions. Dionysius' treatise therefore discloses an underlying connection between the non-discursive thinking represented by prayer and the non-discursive thinking represented by the coincidence of opposites.

The complex chapter 1 of *De Mystica Theologia*[67] includes almost all the ideas stated in later chapters, and can be divided for convenience of exposition into Dionysius' prayer, Dionysius' counsel to Timothy reporting Bartholomew's teaching, and the interpretation of God's counsel to Moses. Dionysius' prayer[68] connects the imperative mood—of the expression "steer us towards" (*ithunon hēmas epi*)[69]—with the affirmation and negation of divine names in such a manner that God is identified with a transcendent property or substance,[70] identified with a mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance,[71] and contrasted with a non-transcendent

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[65] See Dionysius, *DN* 1. 4, 589D (112. 7–10) where the divine names to be discussed in the treatise are described as "beneficent processions" (*agathourgoi proodoi*).

[66] And therefore also in terms of unity (coincidence) and duality (affirmation-negation, affirmation-coincidence, negation-coincidence).

[67] On the interpretation of this text in its historical context see Jean Vanneste, *Le Mystère de Dieu. Essai sur la structure rationelle de la doctrine mystique du pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1959), Ysabel de Andia, *L'Union à Dieu chez Denys l'Aréopagite* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 308–453, and Klitenic Wear and Dillon, *Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neoplatonist Tradition. Despoiling the Hellenes*, pp. 117–129.

[68] Dionysius, *MT* 1, 997AB (141. 3–142. 5).

[69] *MT* 1, 997a (141. 4). Cf. also the concluding imperative: "let that be my prayer" (*emoi men oun tauta ēuchthō*).

[70] At *MT* 1, 997A (141. 3) God is "you who surpass being, divinity, and goodness" (*huperousie kai huperthee kai huperagathe*), and at *MT* 1, 997B (142. 2) he is "secret silence" (*kruphoomustos sigē*).

[71] In *MT* 1, 997A (141. 5) the verbal formula *self-x* is replaced by the metaphor "highest pinnacle" (*akrotatē koruphē*). Several examples of the same substitution occur in the interpretation of God's counsel to Moses at the end of *MT* 1.

property.[72] To this formulation, however, two features are now added. Thus, God is now identified with a transcendent property or substance denoted—now *affirmatively*—by *x* (or *above x*): for example, as "Trinity" (*trias*) and "overseer" (*ephore*).[73] He is also identified with a *self-contradictory* term denoting the coincidence between the transcendent property or substance and the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance: for example, "dazzling darkness" (*huperphōtos gnophos*).[74] The Platonic paradigms corresponding to the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance in *De Divinis Nominibus* are here converted into the more scriptural—and therefore more textual or hermeneutic—"simple, absolute, and unchangeable mysteries of theology" (*hapla kai apoluta kai atrepta tēs theologias musteria*).[75]

Dionysius' counsel to Timothy reporting Bartholomew's teaching[76] can perhaps be divided into three sections. In the first section, Dionysius again connects the imperative mood—now of the expressions "leave behind" (*apoleipe*) and "strain upwards" (*anatathēti*)[77] addressed to Timothy—with the affirmation and negation of divine names. The function of the transcendent property or substance is now performed by the "union with that which is above all being and knowing" (*henōsis … tou huper pasan ousian kai gnōsin*) towards which one strains, that of the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance by the "intellective activities" (*noerai energeiai*) and "intelligible objects" (*noēta*) which one leaves behind,

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[72] The "we" (*hēmeis*) who are to be steered towards the transcendent correspond to this term.

[73] *MT* 1, 997A (141. 3).

[74] *MT* 1, 997B (142. 2). Cf. *MT* 1, 997B (142. 2–3) "outshining all brilliance in the greatest obscurity" (*en tōi skoteinotatōi to huperphanestaton huperlampōn*). Cf. *DN* 7. 1, 868A (194. 16–17) "unintelligent and foolish wisdom" (*anous kai mōra sophia*). These self-contradictory terms expressed in the form *x non-x* are clearly equivalent to self-contradictory terms expressed in two other forms in *De Divinis Nominibus*. These are first, *x above x* (common)—see *DN* 5. 1, 816B (180. 9–10) "the being above being, *qua* above being" (*hē huperousios ousia, hēi huperousios*), and application of similar expressions to being, divinity, goodness at *DN* 2. 4, 641A (126.15–16), and to life at *DN* 6. 1, 856B (191. 3–4); and secondly, *above-x itself* (rare)—see *DN* 5. 6, 820C (184. 17) "the above-goodness itself" (*hē autohuperagathotēs*). The use of the prefix *auto-* in the second usage (emphasizing the presence of the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance within the coincidence) brings out the duality-in-unity at the highest level with particular vividness.

[75] The reference to the "total impalpability and invisibility of their more than beautiful splendors" (*to pampan anaphes kai aoraton tōn huperkalōn aglaiōn*), however, clearly recalls the description of the Forms in Plato's *Phaedrus* myth.

[76] *MT* 1, 997B–1000C (142. 5–143. 17).

[77] *MT* 1, 997B (142. 6) and *MT* 1, 997B (142. 8).

and that of the non-transcendent property by the "senses" (*aisthēseis*) and "sensory objects" (*aisthēta*) which are left behind.[78] In the second section, the imperative mood—of the expression "see to it that" (*hora … hopōs*)[79] addressed to Timothy—is connected with the non-disclosure of the true doctrine regarding God[80] which seems to extend the formulation whereby he is identified simultaneously with a transcendent property or substance and an immanent property. Here, two further theses are proposed: that "the negations are not opposed to the affirmations" (*mē … tas apophaseis antikeimenas einai tais kataphasesin*), and that God is "totally above both negation and affirmation" (*huper pasan kai aphairesin kai thesin*).[81] These obviously represent two further stages of reversion: the conceptual reduction of contradictory terms into a coincidence of opposites, and the conceptual overcoming of the *propositional* form of negation and affirmation.[82] In the third section, Dionysius connects the indicative rather than the imperative mood with the affirmation and negation of divine names in his statement of Bartholomew's teaching, translating the more conventionally metaphysical formulation utilized in his prayer to the Trinity into terms which are simultaneously metaphysical and textual. Thus, the function of the transcendent property or substance is now performed by "Theology" (*theologia*) and "the Gospel" (*to Euangelion*),[83] and that of the coincidence between the transcendent property or substance and the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance now by "the vast and the minute" (*pollē kai elachistē*) and "the broad and the constricted" (*platu kai … suntetmēmenon*).[84]

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[78] *MT* 1, 997B–1000A (142. 5–11).

[79] *MT* 1, 1000A (142. 12).

[80] Dionysius' discussion is here couched in the language of "mystical initiation" (*mustagōgia*). The doctrine is not to be disclosed to two groups of "uninitiated" (*amustoi*) thinkers: *a*.those who think that God can be grasped by "knowledge" (*gnōsis*), and *b*. those who think that he can be grasped "through the lowest things" (*ek tōn en tois ousin eschatōn*). Their philosophical positions obviously correspond to the two levels which God transcends in the second formulation of affirmative and divine naming in the previous paragraph.

[81] *MT* 1, 1000AB (142. 12–143. 7).

[82] Our understanding of this last point is based on the parallel discussion in *MT* 5, 1048AB (150. 2–9) where the overcoming of negation and affirmation is associated with the overcoming of "error" (*planē*) and "truth" (*alētheia*). Falsity and truth reside in (and only in) propositions.

[83] Using more traditional metaphysical terminology it is also "the Good Cause" (*hē agathē aitia*) and "the Beyond All" (*ho pantōn epekeina*).

[84] *MT* 1, 1000BC (143. 8–17).

The interpretation of God's counsel to Moses can perhaps be divided into two sections.[85] In the first section, Dionysius connects a series of reported imperatives—Moses "is ordered" (*keleuetai*) to be first purified and then separated[86]—followed by a series of parallel indicatives—after purification Moses "hears" (*akouei*) the many-voiced trumpets, "sees" (*horāi*) the many lights, "stands apart" (*aphorizetai*) from the multitude, and "presses on" (*phthanei*) to the pinnacle of divine ascents[87]—with the affirmation and negation of divine names. Here, the function of the transcendent property or substance is performed by "God himself who is invisible" (*autos* (*atheatos gar*)),[88] and that of the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance by "the place in which God dwells" (*topos, hou estē*).[89] In the second section, Dionysius explicitly introduces his own interpretation of the biblical narrative on which the above account was based with the phrase: "and I take this to mean" (*touto de oimai sēmainen*).[90] Here, the function of the transcendent property or substance is performed by "the one who transcends all things" (*ho panta huperechōn*)[91] and by "his presence above all conception" (*hē huper pasan apinoian autou parousia*),[92] that of the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance by "the most divine and highest of things seen and known which are hypothetical reason-principles of things subordinate" to God (*ta theiotata kai akrotata tōn horōmenōn kai nooumenōn hupothetikous tinas … tōn hupobeblēmenōn*)[93] and by "the intelligible heights of his most holy places" (*hai noētai akrotētes tōn hagiōtatōn autou topōn*),[94] and that of the coincidence between the transcendent property or substance and the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent substance by "walking upon" (*epibateuousa*).[95] In this sec-

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[85] In interpreting the account of Moses' ascent of Mt. Sinai in *Exodus*, Dionysius depends not only on pagan philosophical sources—i.e. Proclus—but on important Judeo-Christian antecedents. For the relation between Dionysius, Philo, and Gregory of Nyssa see de Andia, *L'Union à Dieu chez Denys l'Aréopagite*, pp. 308–370. However, Gregory's account is notable for an intertextual relation with the *Song of Songs* and an emphasis on Christology which are strikingly absent from the Dionysian treatment.

[86] *MT* 1, 1000C (143. 17–19).

[87] *MT* 1, 1000CD (143. 19–144. 3).

[88] *MT* 1, 1000D (144. 4–5).

[89] *MT* 1, 1000D (144. 5).

[90] *MT* 1, 1000D (144. 5).

[91] *MT* 1, 1001A (144. 7).

[92] *MT* 1, 1001A (144. 7–8).

[93] *MT* 1, 1000D (144. 5–7).

[94] *MT* 1, 1001A (144. 8–9).

[95] *MT* 1, 1001A (144. 9).

ond section, the language applied to the mediating transcendent and non-transcendent property or substance particularly recalls that applied to the Platonic paradigms in *De Divinis Nominibus*.[96]

By interpreting the first chapter of *De Mystica Theologia* in conjunction with the passages of *De Divinis Nominibus*, we can see that the soul's process of reversion—here inseparable from the linguistic activity of prayer—involves the unification of a duality formed by the immanent property and the transcendent property or substance in which the latter is itself the unification of a duality formed by the mediating transcendent and immanent property or substance and the transcendent property or substance. Moreover, the movement towards transcendence and the movement constituting transcendence are viewed by Dionysius as only partially distinct from one another.[97] This is why he can describe the soul's cognitive reversion as a "spiral motion of discursiveness" (*helikoeidōs ... diexodikōs*) which, in contrast with its circular motion of unifying with the divine on the one hand and its rectilinear motion of ascending from sensory symbols on the other, embodies "mixed and changeable activities" (*summiktoi kai metabatikai energeiai*).[98]

Thus, Dionysius' own doctrine can be viewed as a deconstruction of the Platonic model of negative theology in its depiction of prayer as a movement towards God as transcendent Other. Moreover, the Dionysian method of negative theology can be understood as paralleling Derrida's method of deconstruction in its depiction of prayer as a linguistic act establishing its own referent. With respect to this second question, we should compare two passages of which the first speaks of the function of prayer in general:

> Let us stretch ourselves upwards by our prayers towards the more lofty elevation of the divine and good rays. It is as though a shining chain were attached to the heavenly pinnacle and extended downwards to this world. We were grasping it alternately with one hand over the other, and thinking that we were pulling it down. In reality, we were not drawing down that which is

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[96] See especially the references to "intelligibles" and to "hypothetical reason-principles." In the latter case, Dionysius seems to be recalling the doctrine of Plato's *Republic* regarding the hypothetical nature of the Forms during the cognitive ascent to the Good.

[97] The point is underlined by the identification between the first and second formulations of the relation between affirmative and negative divine naming and the transition between the two formulations, and by the dependence of the two formulations upon intellectual rather than real differences and upon the coincidence of opposites rather than logically distinct opposites.

[98] Dionysius, *DN* 4. 9, 705B (153. 17–154. 1). Cf. *DN* 7. 2, 868BC (195. 12–16).

> present above and below, but were ourselves lifted up towards the loftiest flashes of its many-lighted rays.[99]

The second speaks of the final phase of reversion:

> Then he is released from those things seen and seeing, and plunges into the truly mystical darkness of unknowing, where he renounces all his cognitive conceptions, and enters into the wholly intangible and invisible, belonging totally to that which is beyond all things, and to nothing else—neither himself nor another. In his highest faculty, he is united to the totally unknowable by the inactivity of all knowing, and knows that which is above intellect by knowing nothing[100]

The first passage suggests that a seeming action with respect to an object is in reality an action of the subject, and the second passage conversely that a seeming action of the subject is really an action with respect to an object. Thus the referent of the prayer or reversion is ambiguously inside and outside the action.

Given the ambiguous position of the referent, it would seem reasonable to re-interpret the first chapter of *De Mystica Theologia* in conjunction with the passages of *De Divinis Nominibus* as implying that God's activity of procession—also inseparable from the linguistic process of prayer—underlies the unification of the duality formed by the immanent property and the transcendent property or substance in which the latter is itself the unification of the duality formed by the mediating transcendent and immanent substance or property and the transcendent property or substance. Now Dionysius does at one point explain the divine names of "Motion" and

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[99] *DN* 3. 1, 680C (138. 13–139. 6) *hēmas oun autous tais euchais anateinōmen epi tēn tōn theiōn kai agathōn aktinōn hupsēloteran ananeusin, hōsper ei poluphōtou seirās ek tēs ouranias akrotētos ērtēmenēs, eis deupo de kathelkousēs kai aei autēs epi to prosō chersin amoibaiais drattomenoi kathelkein men autēn edekoumen, tōi onti de ou katēgomen ekeinēn anō te kai katō parousan, all'autoi hēmeis anēgometha pros tas hupsēloteras tōn poluphōtōn aktinōn marmarugas*. Derrida has himself alluded to this passage at *CNPP*, p. 575.

[100] Dionysius, *MT* 1, 1001A (144. 9–13) *kai tote kai autōn apoluetai tōn horōmenōn kai tōn horōntōn kai eis ton gnophon tēs agnōsias eisdunei ton ontōs mustikon, kath'hon apomuei pasas tas gnōstikas antilēpseis, kai en tōi pampan anaphei kai aoratōi gignetai, pas ōn tou pantōn epekeina kai oudenos, oute heautou oude heterou, tōi pantelōs de agnōstōi tēi pasēs gnōseōs anenergēsiāi kata to kreitton henoumenos kai tōi mēden ginōskein huper noun ginōskōn*—this passage concludes the account of Moses' ascent discussed earlier. It is significant that the union which is the goal of mystical theology involves a *knowing* by which one *knows nothing* (self-contradictory) rather than simply a *knowing nothing* (not self-contradictory). This shows *a*. that one reaches the unity-in-duality of the godhead rather than simply a unity, and *b*. that there is no *affective* state above the intellectual. For the ontological status of the self-contradictory term see n. 74.

"Rest" in terms of the same circular, spiral, and rectilinear motions which were earlier associated with the soul's reversion, the "spiral motion" (*to helikoeides*) here representing God's "stable procession and productive rest" (*hē stathera proodos kai hē gonimos stasis*).[101] This means that the movement towards transcendence and the movement constituting transcendence are again viewed as only partially distinct from one another.

The handling of certain technical terms in Dionysius' text gives us a further measure of Derrida's reading of his source. *1. Place*. At the end of his first reading of Dionysius, a notion of place in the sense of "union" comes to the fore which has a solid basis in the Greek text.[102] Derrida here explains that prayer seeks a union with the transcendent, the union being dependent on a certain place (singular) or places (plural) between God and the suppliant, the place(s) being differentiated in that God is already both non-present and present to the suppliant and that God is present to all things while all things are not present to God.[103] This treatment of place in which Derrida maintains the asymmetrical contradictories: *essence interpreted* > *interpretation without essence* of Dionysius' original may be contrasted with another discussion in which these contradictories are inverted in a deconstructive reading of the source text. At the beginning of his second reading of Dionysius, a notion of place as "apostrophe" acquires a prominence which has no explicit warrant in the Greek.[104] Derrida here explains that prayer involves a hermeneutic shifting—when the prayer is quoted—also conceivable as place, this place being differentiated in that it occurs within the context of an address to the other without any change of direction and in that of an event having the temporal structure of the future perfect.[105] *2. Seal*. At the end of the second reading of Dionysius, the figure of the seal is extracted from the Greek text but altered in meaning. Taking his starting-point from prayer's relation to affirmative and negative naming, Derrida follows Dionysius in making the seal a figure of the simultaneous participation and non-participation of all things in God and of the differentiation of the participation by the participants themselves, but departs from his source in associating the seal

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101 Dionysius, *DN* 9. 9, 916CD (213. 17–18).

102 This notion of place is associated with the Platonic Good discussed earlier in Derrida's "paradigm A" of negative theology. See *CNPP*, p. 575.

103 Derrida, *CNPP*, pp. 574–575.

104 This notion of place is associated with the Platonic *Khōra* discussed earlier in Derrida's "paradigm A" of negative theology. See *CNPP*, pp. 580–581.

105 *CNPP*, pp. 579–581.

with the duality of revealing and concealing with respect to the future.[106] The degree of parallelism between Dionysius' method of negative theology and Derrida's method of deconstruction is obviously enhanced by this alteration in the interpretation of the figure.

Finally, something should be said about the relations implied in Dionysius' text between the notions of apostrophe, quotation, and enfolding. Now, when speaking of the textual relations between Dionysius and his disciple Timothy,[107] Derrida places considerable emphasis on the association of one type of non-discursive thinking—that represented by apostrophe—with quotation. However, when referring to the analogous textual relations between Dionysius and his teacher Hierotheos,[108] he does not develop a complementary argument. *A propos* Dionysius' comment that he does not wish to "repeat the same truths twice," he notes that Dionysius' writing is a supplement with respect to Hierotheos' just as Hierotheos' text is a supplement with respect to God's, and also that the addition of supplements results from the weakness of readers rather than from a gap in what is read. This obvious reference to the general structure known as *supplément* shows that Derrida is again emphasizing the parallelism between the methods of negative theology and deconstruction. However, he does not seize the opportunity presented by Dionysius' comment of noting that Dionysius' writing unfolds what is enfolded by Hierotheos' just as Hierotheos' text unfolds what is enfolded by God's, the relation between enfolding and unfolding being that of a relatively non-discursive to a relatively discursive mode of thinking. If Derrida had followed this line of interpretation, he would have been able to cast light on the association of a second type of non-discursive thinking—that represented by enfolding—with quotation. In its turn, the circularity by which the non-discursive thinking of apostrophe connects through quotation with the non-discursive thinking of enfolding would have emerged more clearly into view.

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[106] *CNPP*, pp. 581–582. For the association of the figure of the seal with the Platonic *Khōra* discussed earlier in Derrida's "paradigm A" of negative theology see *CNPP*, pp. 582–583.

[107] *CNPP*, p. 579.

[108] *CNPP*, p. 580, n. 1.

2.3. HEARING VOICES

Meister Eckhart

As stated in the preceding chapter, Derrida's first discussion of Eckhart follows upon his first discussion of Dionysius. The last point made in the Dionysian discussion—that according to this writer God, as the principle of the Good, actually transcends the Good—leads Derrida to begin an extended paraphrase of Eckhart's *Quasi stella matutina*. Here, he focuses on the citations early in the text of Augustine's references to God as wise without wisdom, good without goodness, powerful without power, and Bernard of Clairvaux's references to the love of God as a mode without a mode, noting that these utterances—which all concern a negativity that is without negativity and a transcendence both not-other and wholly other—imply "a principle of multiplication of voices and discourses" (*un principe de démultiplication des voix et des discours*).[1] Derrida characterizes this principle as that whereby a predicate simultaneously seems to conceal but actually does not conceal another predicate and whereby an utterance simultaneously seems to quote but actually does not quote another utterance, the important point being not that these texts embody simultaneous affirmations and negations of terms and simultaneous quotations and non-quotations, but that these two simultaneities turn out to be aspects of a single phenomenon. When Derrida further argues that the sermons exploit the re-duplication[2] of voices to such an extent that one can no longer distinguish between seeing the nakedness of God and hearing the voice of Meister Eckhart, he is clearly transforming the metaphysical context of the soul's relation to God—which obviously dominates in the original sermons—into the deconstrictive context of a text's relation to its Other.

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[1] *Comment ne pas parler*, pp. 575–576. The connection between formulae of the type "*x* without *x*" and the multiplication of voices and discourses is repeated in Derrida, *Sauf le Nom*, pp. 15 and 25–28.

[2] We will henceforth translate Derrida's *démultiplication* as "re-duplication." The use of the prefix *dé* in the French expression is probably intended to suggest a dynamic compounding which is simultaneously a non-compounding. It is difficult to reproduce this effect in English. We have accordingly substituted the term "re-duplication" which has at least a nuance of non-compounding totally absent from the term "multiplication."

The phenomenon constituted by the simultaneous affirmation and negation of terms and the simultaneous quotation and non-quotation of utterances is exemplified at greater length in Derrida's handling of the intertextual relations between *Quasi stella matutina* and other works. In one case, the intertextual relation is between the sermon and the Hermetic *Liber XXIV Philosophorum* which the sermon quotes, and between the sermon and the bull of 1327 "In the field of the Lord" condemning Eckhart's teachings which quotes the sermon. With respect to the Hermetic work, Derrida notes the sermon's account of the twenty-four masters who assembled in order to discuss the nature of God and the assertion by one of those masters that God is something that is of necessity above Being.[3] He continues by observing that the sermon's extended commentary on this assertion takes place using a voice which cannot be definitively identified as Eckhart's own, or as that of one of the twenty-four masters, or as that of some other master. This uncertainty of provenance especially affects the sermon's further conclusion that "God is neither being nor goodness (*Got enist niht wesen noch gűete*). Goodness clings to being and is not more comprehensive (*breiter*) than being, for if there were no being, there would be no goodness, and being is purer than goodness. God is not good, nor better, nor best. Whoever were to say that God is good would do him as great an injustice as if he called the sun black."[4] With respect to the bull of condemnation, Derrida notes that only an article appended to the main list of condemned propositions is extracted from the end of this text, implying that Eckhart himself was not thought by the inquisitors to have held the doctrine.[5] With this passage of Derrida which suggests that the simultaneous quotation and non-quotation of utterances simply *contains* the simultaneous affirmation and negation of terms may be contrasted another passage where, in a stronger sense, the simultaneous affirmation and negation of terms is treated as actually *implicated in* the simultaneous quotation and non-quotation of utterances. In this case, the intertextual relation is between the sermon and the first of the so-called *Parisian Questions* which record the dispute between Eckhart the Dominican and the Franciscan Gonsalvo of Spain at the University of Paris during

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[3] *CNPP*, p. 576.

[4] *Predigt* 9, *DW* I. 148. 3–7 *Got enist niht wesen noch gűete. Gűete klebet an wesene und enist niht breiter dan wesen; wan enwære niht wesen, sô enwære niht gűete, und wesen ist noch lûterer dan gűete. Got enist guot noch bezzer noch allerbeste. Wer dâ sprœche, daz got guot wære, der tæte im als unrehte, als ob er die sunnen swarz hieze*. In this and future citations of Derrida citing Eckhart, the German terms inserted by Derrida are noted.

[5] *CNPP*, pp. 576–577.

the academic year 1302–1303. Derrida continues his reading of the sermon beyond the passage quoted above by noting its quotation of an unnamed pagan master's teaching that the soul loves God under the veil of goodness whereas intellect raises this veil and grasps God in his nakedness.[6] He adds that this proposition is now seemingly differentiated, made dialectical,[7] or unveiled in Eckhart's own voice. Thus, the sermon goes on to state that "I once said in the school that intellect (*vernűnfticheit*) is nobler than will … then a master in another school said that will is nobler than intellect … But I say that intellect is nobler than the will because the will apprehends God under the garment of (*unter dem kleide*) goodness. The intellect apprehends God naked and divested of goodness and being" (*Vernűnfticheit nimet got blôz, als er entkleidet ist von gűete und von wesene*).[8] In this passage of Derrida, the references to differentiation, dialectic, and unveiling establish a link between the simultaneous affirmation and negation of intellect's superiority and the simultaneous quotation and non-quotation of the pagan master's utterance which is held to be of particular importance.

The relation between the text's re-duplicated voices, either direct and indirect or affirmative and negative, corresponds to what Derrida elsewhere calls a *supplément* in the technical language of deconstruction. For this reason, the sermon's comparison between the relation of the soul to God—which for Derrida by this point in his interpretation overlaps with the text's relation to its other—and the relation of the "adverb" (*bîwort*) to the "Word" (*wort*) is most opportune.[9] At this point, Derrida cites the explanation of the *quasi* in the title *Quasi stella matutina* which is finally introduced near the end of the sermon:

> "As (*als*) a morning-star in the midst of the mist." I refer to the little word *quasi* which means "as" (*als*)—in school the children call it an adverb (*ein bîwort*). This is what I refer to in all my sermons. The most appropriate (*eigenlîcheste*) things that one can say about God are word and truth (*wort und wârheit*). God called himself a word (*ein wort*). St. John said: "In the beginning was

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[6] *CNPP*, p. 577.

[7] However, Derrida expresses hesitation about using the term "dialectical." This is perhaps because he believes that with Eckhart, discursive thinking (= dialectic) is blended with non-discursive thinking or affective non-thinking.

[8] *Pred.* 9, *DW* I, 152. 9–153. 5 *Ich sprach in der schuole, daz vernűnfticheit edeler wære san wille … Dô sprach ein meister in einer andern schuole, wille wære edeler dan vernűnfticheit … Ich spriche aber, daz vernűnfticheit edeler is dan wille. Wille nimet got under dem kleide der gűete. Vernűnfticheit nimet got blôz, als er entkleidet ist von gűete und von wesene*.

[9] *CNPP*, p. 578.

> the Word," and means that beside the Word, man is an adverb. In the same way, the free star (*der vrîe sterne*) Venus, after which Friday (*vrîtac*) is named, has many names … Of all the stars, it is always equally near to the sun. It never moves farther from or nearer to it (*niemer verrer noch naeher*), and symbolizes (*meinet*) a man who wants to be near God always, and present (*gegenwertic*) to him, so that nothing can remove him from God, neither happiness, unhappiness, nor any creature … The more the soul is raised (*erhaben*) above earthly things, the stronger (*kreftiger*) it is. Even a person who knows nothing but the creatures would never need to think of any sermons, for every creature is full of God and is a book (*buoch*).[10]

Although Derrida accomplishes the shift from metaphysics to deconstruction very adroitly by interpreting this quotation as referring not to the relation of the soul to God but to the relation between the sermon itself and the divine Word, he does not at this point in his discussion exploit the polysemy of the term *bîwort* already apparent in the original text. He does however conclude by noting that the supplementary character of the sermon must be oriented by the prayer to the divinity, effecting by this comment a return to the guiding thematic of the Dionysian analysis which preceded this first incursion into Meister Eckhart.[11]

As stated in our earlier summary, Derrida's second discussion of Eckhart follows upon his second discussion of Dionysius. The last point made in the Dionysian discussion—that according to this writer God, in his manifestation as a place, can be compared to a seal—leads Derrida to begin an elliptical paraphrase of Eckhart's *Renovamini spiritu*.[12] Here, he focuses on the citation early in the text of Augustine's development of the analogy between the divine and created trinities where the Father's pouring of the treasure of his being into the Son and the Holy Spirit is reflected in the memory's pouring of

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[10] *Pred.* 9, *DW* I. 154. 7–156. 9 *"Als ein morgensterne miten in dem nebel." Ich meine daz wörtelin "quasi," daz heizet "als," daz heizent diu kint in der schuole ein bîwort. Diz ist, daz ich in allen mînen predigen meine. Daz aller eigenlîcheste, daz man von gote gesprechen mac, daz ist wort und wârheit. Got nante sich selber ein wort. Sant Johannes sprach: "in dem anevange was daz wort," und meinet, daz man bî dem worte sî ein bîwort. Als der vrîe sterne nâch dem vrîtac genant ist, Vênus: der hât manigen namen … Vor allen sternen ist er alwege glîch nâhe der sunnen; er enkumet ir niemer verrer noch nœher und meinet einen menschen, der hie zuo komen wil, der sol gote alle zît bî und gegenwertic sîn, alsô daz in niht von gote műge geverren weder glűcke noch unglűcke noch kein crêatûre … Ie mêr diu sêle erhaben ist űber irdischiu dinc, ie kreftiger si ist. Der niht dan die crêatûren bekante, der endörfte niemer gedenken ûf keine predige, wan ein ieglîchiu crêatûre ist vol gotes und ist ein buoch.* Derrida notes that the phrase "about God" (fourth line of quotation) is missing in the French translation.

[11] *CNPP*, p. 578.

[12] *CNPP*, pp. 582–583.

the treasure of its images into the soul's powers, and on Eckhart's comment that God created in the higher part of the soul—called *mens* or *geműte*—"a potential (*craft*) which the masters call a receptacle (*sloz*) or screen (*schrin*) of spiritual forms or of formal images."[13] Derrida continues by describing this power as that in which through the setting aside of images the naked being of the soul may encounter the naked super-essential being of God, this encounter between naked being and naked super-essential being through the setting aside of images being subsequently equated with loving one's object as a non-God, a non-intellect, a non-person, and a non-image. The rather abrupt shift from a cognitive to an affective mode of approach to God—according to Derrida, marked by the sermon's resort to the imperative: "be silent"—is somewhat mitigated by Eckhart's dissociation of the two modes similarly from the image-producing function of spirit.

Still remaining within the text of *Renovamini spiritu*, Derrida focuses on Eckhart's description of the soul's power as a "receptacle" (*sloz*) in order to activate an intertextual connection with Plato's similar description of "place" (*khōra*). Both the earlier writers speak of what receives as unmoved and formless, although the figure of place—which Derrida calls the figure of figures—also undergoes a displacement in Eckhart towards the senses of the created and the physical. Now the most important point is the emphatic connection between place and a mode of discourse which emerges here. Given that the power of the soul has been coupled with the injunction to be silent with respect to the ineffable and unknowable God, Derrida adds:

> This is to speak in order to command not to speak, to say what God is not, that he *is* a non-God. How may one hear the copula of being that articulates this singular speech and this order to be silent? Where does it have its place? Where does it take place? It is the place, the place of this writing, this trace (left in Being) of what is not, and the writing of this place.[14]

In other words, Eckhart's notion of the soul's power becomes for Derrida—as Plato's notion of *khōra* had already become—the place of the deconstruction of metaphysics.

Returning to the text of *Quasi stella matutina*, Derrida continues this line of argument by developing the notions of a "threshold" (*seuil*) and

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[13] *Pred.* 83, *DW* III, 437. 2–438. 3 *eine kraft, die heisent die meistere ein sloz oder einen schrin geistlicher formen oder formelicher bilde*.

[14] *CNPP* pp. 583–584 *Parler pour commander de ne pas parler, dire ce que Dieu n'est pas et qu'il* est *un non-Dieu. La copule de l'être qui articule cette parole singulière et cet ordre de se-taire, comment l'entendre? Où a-t-elle son lieu? Où a-t-elle lieu? elle est le lieu, le lieu de cette écriture, cette trace* (*laissée dans l'être*) *de ce qui n'est pas, et l'écriture de ce lieu.*

of a "sieve" (*crible*). The first notion is derived explicitly from Eckhart's comparison of the Being in which the soul understands God to the "outer sanctuary" (*vorbűrge*) of the temple in which God dwells,[15] and the second explicitly from Eckhart's comparison of the soul's understanding of God to the eye's perception of its object through air and light,[16] there being in both cases an implicit intertextual reference to Heidegger's notion of "Difference" (*Unter-schied, Dif-ferenz*) through the suggestion of irreducible duality.[17] Regarding the threshold, Derrida therefore writes:

> The place is only a place of passage, and more precisely, a threshold. But a threshold, this time, to give access to what is no longer a place. A subordination, a relativization of the place, and an extraordinary consequence: the place is Being. What finds itself reduced to the condition of a threshold is Being itself. Being as a place.[18]

Regarding the sieve, he continues:

> Eckhart compares the eye to a sieve. Things must be "passed through the sieve (*gebiutelt*)." This sieve is not one figure among others: it tells the difference between Being and non-being. It discerns this difference, it allows one to see it, but as the eye itself. There is no text, above all no sermon, no possible predication, without the intervention of such a filter.[19]

These two explorations of Meister Eckhart's writing have shown Derrida to be implementing his complex strategy of reading without stating its nature formally.[20] Once again, this strategy can be understood as having

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[15] *Pred.* 83, *DW* I, 150. 1–2.

[16] *Pred.* 83, *DW* I, 151, 4–8.

[17] i.e. the so-called "Ontological Difference." On the introduction of Heidegger here see chapter 2.2, note 8.

[18] *CNPP*, p. 584 *Celui-ci n'est qu'un lieu de passage, plus précisément un seuil. Mais un seuil, cette fois, pour accéder à ce qui n'est plus un lieu. Subordination, relativisation du lieu, extraordinaire conséquence: le lieu, c'est l'être. Ce qui ce trouve réduit à la condition de seuil, c'est l'être lui-même, l'être comme lieu.*

[19] *CNPP*, p. 584 *Eckart le compare à un crible. Les choses doivent être "passées au crible"* (gebiutelt). *Ce n'est pas une figure parmi d'autres, elle dit la différence entre l'être et le non-être, elle la discerne, elle la donne à voir, mais comme l'oeil même. Il n'y a pas de texte, surtout pas de sermon, pas de prédication possible, sans l'invention d'un tel filtre.*

[20] In order to obtain a complete view of Derrida's relation to Eckhart, one should perhaps supplement the two discussions in *CNPP* with certain passages in *Sauf le Nom*, where the work of Angelus Silesius is the main topic. In this context, Eckhart's notion of "detachment" (*Gelazenheit*), in a strong intertextual relationship with Heidegger, is recalled. At *SLN*, pp. 71–72, 89–94 and 98–103, Derrida discusses the movement of transcending—specified as the movement towards God, or to the Other, or to the *n'importe*—as involving both passivity and impassivity and both possibility and impossibility. The notion of the threshold from Eckhart's Sermon 9 is also prominent. Cf. Derrida, *Passions*, pp. 68–71.

been twofold. On the one hand, it has deconstructed the text of negative theology by inverting and also not inverting the asymmetrical contradictories which it embodies. On the other hand, it has shown the degree to which the methods of negative theology and of deconstruction can be considered as parallel to one another. The backdrop against which this twofold strategy has been pursued is the distance that remains between a medieval author influenced by the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions of metaphysical thinking and the modern project of writing in the aftermath of Heidegger's *Destruktion* of onto-theology. For example, Derrida comments on the statement in Sermon 9 that calling God good is comparable to calling the sun black, noting that the theory of archetypes forming the context of this argument "attenuates its provocative character" (*atténue le caractère provocant*). He then notes the contrast emphasized by Eckhart between loving God under the veil of goodness and understanding him by lifting the veil, speaking of the "entire axiomatics of this apophasis" (*toute l'axiomatique de cette apophase*) which however evades the rigor of strict deduction.[21] These comments remind us that the convictions regarding the Platonic theory of Forms—as assimilated to the medieval teaching concerning the divine names—and the logical operations accomplished by using the Forms are seen by Derrida to be fundamental points on which Eckhart's thinking is opposed to the deconstructive approach.[22] We must now consider Derrida's strategy in a more formal way. Here, the use of utterances in the imperative mode, the handling of the notion of Receptacle, and the threefold relation between the first person, the second person, and God may be selected as examples of the deconstruction of the text of negative theology. On the other hand, the handling of the technical term "adverb" and of the notion of "sieve" may be chosen as instances of the parallelism between negative theology and deconstruction. In both cases, we will test

[21] *CNPP*, pp. 576–577.

[22] It is important to make sure that one understands Derrida's position—particularly in connection with the issues to be studied later in this essay. Here, one must bear in mind a fundamental contrast between *a*. the traditional Platonic doctrine in which the human soul's movement towards transcendence must be distinguished metaphysically from the transcendence itself of Unity or Being and where unity is prior cause of duality, and *b*. the position of Heidegger's followers in which *Dasein*'s movement towards transcendence can be distinguished only hermeneutically from the transcendence itself of Difference, Being, or Thinking and where unity and duality are equally primordial. Derrida's reading of authors inspired by Platonism such as Eckhart invariably assumes the latter as the position from which the critique is directed. On these questions see further Derrida's discussion in *Sauf le Nom*, pp. 71–76.

the efficacy of Derrida's theory-practice by attempting to extend it into a more precise reading of the text of philosophy.

Derrida's first reading of Dionysius had included an analysis of prayer as something representing a movement towards God as transcendent Other, implementing a non-predicative mode of thinking, establishing a referent through the utterance itself, and embodying a relation to a future which can never be present. Now certain elements in Eckhart's writing could undoubtedly be used to extend this argument about the nature of prayer—particularly with respect to its non-predicative aspect.[23] For example, Eckhart's use of utterances in the imperative mode as a structural device in the organization of his texts indicates the extent to which a shift of emphasis from predicative to non-predicative discourse is underway in his thinking. In fact, Sermon 83 takes its starting-point from a Pauline utterance in the imperative mode: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (*renovamini autem spiritu mentis vestrae*), exploring the meaning of this injunction after a brief discussion of the metaphysical relation between the human and the divine spheres. Further imperatives such as "now pay attention" (*nu merkent*!), "you must" (*du must*), "you should" (*du solt*)[24] punctuate the more theoretical and predicative discussion in the main body of the sermon at strategic points. Moreover, the conclusion of the sermon may be seen as unfolding the implications of the imperative mode in that the replacement of the cognitive by the affective approach to God *and* the failure of predicative discourse as such are simultaneously marked by the command: "all that must go" (*es mus alles abe*!).[25] In pursuing such a reading, Derrida could be seen as deconstructing the text of negative theology by inverting the asymmetrical contradictories: *predicative discourse* > *non-predicative discourse*.

Derrida's handling of certain technical terms in Eckhart's text is also very instructive: *1. Adverb*. By immediately substituting his own term "supplement" for the "adverb" of the original text of Sermon 9, Derrida indeed suggests in his first reading of Eckhart that the medieval author is approaching his own notion of a "general structure."[26] However, a more extensive reading of the sermon indicates that the relation between the two authors is at this point even closer. Thus, the notion of an adverb reveals the fusion of signifier and signified typical of general structures like "différance" in that the

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[23] With respect to the self-referential aspect see n. 31 below.

[24] *Pred.* 83, *DW* III, 444. 4, 446. 1, 447. 3.

[25] *Pred.* 83, *DW* III, 448. 6.

[26] On "general structure" see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida, Parallelograms*, pp. 64–65, 69–71, 127–133.

syntactic relation between a subordinate word and the main word which governs it is reflected in the spatial relation between the prefix: "ad-" and the term to which it is attached: "verb." Secondly, the notion follows the pattern of general structures in implying a possibility of metonymic substitution: here, that of *quasi* for *bî-wort*. Finally, the notion of adverb reveals the fusion of external and internal peculiar to the general structure "supplément" in that *bî-wort* itself represents the relation between adverb and word while *quasi* represents the relation between the pair adverb + word and the pair morning-star + sun.[27] Thus, in its employment of the technical term "adverb," the Eckhartian method of negative theology can be understood as paralleling the Derridean method of deconstruction. *2. Receptacle*. Derrida seems to employ the notion of Receptacle in sermon 83—discussed in his second reading of Eckhart—as a means of establishing a link with Plato. In elaborating "paradigm A" of negative theology in the second part of "How to Avoid Speaking," it had been necessary for Derrida to consider two general structures: the Idea of the Good described in the *Republic* and the *khōra* described in the *Timaeus*.[28] These structures turned out to be similar in allowing for the imposition of a given form, of another form, of all forms, and of no forms, yet different in that the Idea of the Good constitutes an excess of being whereas *khōra* eludes being altogether. In discussing "paradigm B" of negative theology in the second part of his essay, Derrida now attempts to treat the Receptacle of Sermon 83 as combining the features of Plato's two general structures in a more integral manner. In his discussion of this question, Derrida can be seen as deconstructing the text of negative theology by inverting the asymmetry of contradictories: *form* > *matter* assumed by Eckhart. *3. Sieve*. Derrida seems to employ the notion of Sieve in Sermon 9—also discussed in his second reading of Plato—as a means of establishing a link with Heidegger. In elaborating "paradigm C" of negative theology in the second part of "How to Avoid Speaking," it will be necessary for Derrida to consider the primordial unity-in-duality of Being as opposed to beings which is described in *On the Question of Being*.[29] Eckhart had introduced the notion of sieve in a context where he was distinguishing three powers of the soul—the power by which it digests food, the power in the eye which does not perceive things in their grosser condition but only through the mediation of air and light, and the power by which it thinks—, the unitary-dual perception of the

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[27] Or the pair: human soul + God.

[28] *CNPP*, pp. 563–569.

[29] *CNPP*, pp. 588–590. This is implicitly yet another "general structure."

second power's objects being characterized as "sifted" (*gebiutelt*). In discussing "paradigm B" of negative theology in the second part of his essay, Derrida now attempts to apply the inherent unity-in-duality of the eye's perception by analogy to the soul's *highest* power. Thus, in its employment of the notion of sieve, the Eckhartian method of negative theology can again be understood as paralleling the Derridean method of deconstruction.

Derrida's second reading of Dionysius had endeavored to situate prayer—analyzed as something representing a movement towards God as transcendent Other, implementing a non-predicative mode of thinking, establishing a referent through the utterance itself, and embodying a relation to a future which can never be present—within the context formed by the relations between the first person, the second person, and God. Now certain elements in Eckhart's writing could undoubtedly be used to extend this argument about the context of prayer. It is arguable that when the preacher of Sermon 83 urges his hearer to sink down from the hearer's "your-ness" (*dinisheit*), flow into God's "his-ness" (*sinesheit*), and make God and the hearer become "one mine" (*ein min*) in order to approach the unknowable and inexpressible divinity,[30] he is articulating the experience of conversion associated with prayer in precisely such a context. Towards the end of the same sermon, the preacher urges his hearer to perceive God without images as he himself perceives God without a medium in order that the perceiver and the perceived may become one. Here, the experience of conversion associated with prayer is described as a process of unification in which "this 'he' and this 'I' become and are one 'is'" (*dis 'er' und dis 'ich' ein 'ist' werdent und sint*), and a state of "is-ness" (*istikeit*) in which both the "he" who is God and the "I" who is the soul "perform one work" (*ein werk wirkent*).[31] In pursuing such a reading, Derrida could be seen as deconstructing the text of negative theology by inverting the asymmetrical contradictories: *transcendent God* > *non-transcendent human*.

The study of one particular issue arising in Eckhart's text gives us a further measure of the possibilities inherent in Derrida's approach. In this case, we can amplify the complex strategy applied on one occasion when Derrida

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[30] *Pred.* 83, *DW* III, 443. 5–7.

[31] *Pred.* 83, *DW* III, 447. 4–8. The almost total assimilation of the dynamic process in the human soul to the dynamic process within the godhead itself suggested by this argument—and by many others in Eckhart's German writings—produces a discourse which comes close to establishing its own referent. As we have seen, this establishment of a referent through the utterance itself is—in combination with the implementation of a non-predicative mode of thinking—one of the features of Derrida's interpretation of prayer.

simultaneously *1*. deconstructs the text of negative theology by inverting the asymmetrical contradictories: *essence interpreted* > *interpretation without essence*—this deconstruction also involving the connection of interpretation and the negative / affirmative antithesis: two elements unconnected in the source—and *2*. establishes a parallelism between negative theology and deconstruction with respect to the functions of negation in the former and *différance* in the latter. It will be recalled that, in elaborating his first reading of Eckhart around the concept of a re-duplication of voices which emerged in Sermon 9, Derrida had focused on the statement that, whereas the will apprehends God in the garment of goodness, intellect grasps God divested of goodness and being. This brief remark about the function of intellect can now be expanded by drawing upon some more technical discussions of *a*. the relation between intellect and negation and *b*. the relation between intellect and "the negation of negation" in Eckhart's Latin writings.[32]

In the first of his *Quaestiones Parisienses*, Eckhart considers whether "being" (*esse*) and "intellection" are the same in God. In the early part of his discussion, he seems to be articulating the conventional affirmative solution to this question by introducing six arguments drawn from the writings of Thomas Aquinas—that intellection is an immanent act, that there is no accident in God, that nothing is more perfect than the first being, that there is no passive potency in God, that everything exists for the sake of intellection, and that intellection is to its form as being is to essence—, and then by adding one argument of his own.[33] However, Eckhart also seems to undercut the conventional affirmative solution first, in the phraseology of his initial answer to the question where he states that being and intellection are the same in God "in reality and perhaps in both reality and thought" (*re, et forsan re et ratione*)[34]—Aquinas had acknowledged the distinction in thought—and secondly, in developing a lengthy argument to the effect that God's being is somehow dependent on his intellection.

Eckhart begins this latter argument by suggesting that, since God is because he understands rather than understands because he is, "intellection is the foundation of his being" (*intelligere fundamentum eius esse*).[35]

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[32] The "intellect" involved in discussions *a* and *b* is less the intellect of an individual person than the more abstract intellect "in so far as it is intellect" (*in quantum huiusmodi*). Moreover, the intellect of discussion *a* is intellect as such whereas the intellect of discussion *b* is intellect *as unity*. On the first point, see Eckhart: *Quaestiones Parisienses* 2, n. 2, *LW* V, 50. 1 and 2, n. 7, *LW* V, 52. 16.

[33] *QP* 1, n. 1–3, *LW* V, 37. 5–40. 4.

[34] *QP* 1, n. 1, *LW* V, 37. 4.

[35] *QP* 1, n. 4, *LW* V, 40. 7.

This quasi-priority of intellect over being as divine attribute is immediately established both on the basis of authority, since the biblical pronouncement "In the Beginning was the Word" clearly pertains entirely to intellect,[36] and on the basis of reason, since being implies "the status of what can be created" (*ratio creabilis*) whereas intellect does not.[37] Moreover, this quasi-priority is reinforced by frequent allusions to the pseudo-Dionysian doctrine according to which God is non-being in the sense of above being.[38] Thus, with respect to intellect and that which is *non*-being, Eckhart can assert that God is "an intellect and intellection but not a being and being" (*intellectus et intelligere et non ens vel esse*),[39] and with respect to intellect and that which is *above* being, he can argue that being "has the status of what can be created" (*habet rationem creabilis*) whereas intellect—to which the divine Wisdom pertains—"does not have the status of what can be created" (*non habet rationem creabilis*).[40]

A close association between intellection and non-being is assumed by Eckhart not only in the case of divine intellection but also in that of intellection in general.[41] In the second *Quaestio Parisiensis*, one of his arguments shows that intellection *a.* is a non-being and *b.* is projective in character.[42] Here, he notes that whatever is made for a purpose must be adapted to that purpose: for example, the tool designed to saw wood must have a toothed edge. Therefore a cognitive form intended to represent something to the intellect should be a "non-being" (*non-ens*)—otherwise, the intellect could be distracted from that which is to be represented to that which is doing the

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[36] *QP* 1, n. 6, *LW* V, 43. 3–5. Cf. *QP* 1, n. 4, *LW* V, 40. 7–11.

[37] *QP* 1, n. 4, *LW* V, 41. 4–14. Cf. *Prologus generalis in Opus Tripartitum*, n. 16, *LW* I/1, 160, 7–12 *Expositio libri Sapientiae*, n. 21, *LW* II, 342. 10–12 and n. 24, *LW* II, 344. 5–9. The arguments based on authority and reason are combined at *Expositio sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*, n. 38, *LW* III, 32. 7–15 where Eckhart glosses the biblical passage "In the Beginning was the Word" by noting that a principle is always "pure intellect in which there is no other being than intellection" (*intellectus purus in quo non sit aliud esse quam intelligere*). In a slightly different vein, Eckhart argues at *QP* 1, n. 9, *LW* V, 45. 6–11 that "being" (*esse*) is associated with the creature, and "purity of being" (*puritas essendi*) with the creator.

[38] The argument at *QP* 1, n. 6, *LW* V, 42. 8–43. 2 that the order of priority among divine attributes is intellection, living, being, whereas among created properties it is being, living, intellection particularly recalls Dionysius (or the *Book of Causes*).

[39] *QP* 1, n. 4, *LW* V, 41. 13–14. Cf. *QP* 1, n. 8, *LW* V, 45. 1–5.

[40] *QP* 1, n. 4, *LW* V, 41. 6–11. Cf. *QP* 1, n. 9, *LW* V, 45. 9–11.

[41] Very typically, Eckhart is combining epistemological notions drawn from Aristotle with negative theology of the pseudo-Dionysian type throughout these discussions.

[42] For a good discussion of these arguments see John D. Caputo, "The Nothingness of the Intellect in Meister Eckhart's *Parisian Questions*," in *The Thomist* 39 (1975), pp. 85–115.

representing.[43] In the same question, a further argument shows that intellection *a.* is not a mental being and *b.* is projective in character. Here, he recalls Aristotle's demonstration that a cognitive form is distinct from both substance and accident in the extra-mental world, and an argument based on this that a cognitive form is a "mental being" (*ens in anima*) present in the soul as an accident in a subject. He rejects this by showing that a cognitive form exists not on the side of the subject and the interior but on that of the object and the exterior.[44]

The fact that intellection has turned out to be a non-being and projective in character helps to explain two peculiar features of the discussion in the first *Quaestio Parisiensis*.[45] On the one hand, Eckhart had initially set out to prove that being and intellection are the same in God but ended by showing that intellection has a quasi-priority. On the other hand, he had begun the whole discussion with the explicit statement that being and intellect are the same in God "perhaps in both reality and in thought." How does one connect the transition from identity to non-identity implied by the first aspect of Eckhart's discussion with the notion of an identity which is both ontological and logical in nature implied by the second? The answer is that this is achieved through a novel concept of intellection: something which, as a non-being and projective in character, is purely *hermeneutic* in nature.[46]

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[43] *QP* 2, n. 6, *LW* V, 52. 6–10. Cf. *QP* 1, n. 7, *LW* V, 43. 13–44. 5. Eckhart also argues that intellection is non-being on the grounds that it is indeterminate. See *QP* 2, n. 9, *LW* V, 53. 16–18.

[44] *QP* 2, n. 5, *LW* V, 51. 8–12 continuing at n. 6, *LW* V, 52. 12–15. The association between intellect and non-being is also apparent in the case of specific types of intellectual activity. Thus, the intellect can conceive universals, although a universal is not a being. See *QP* 2, n. 8, *LW* V, 53. 14–15. Similarly, intellect can consider impossible things, although impossible things are not beings. See *QP* 1, n. 7, 44. 6–9.

[45] This explanation of intellect as *a.* non-being and *b.* projective has given rise to the view expressed in some modern scholarship that Eckhart has anticipated the subjectivity characteristic of much post-Cartesian philosophy and especially certain positions of German Idealism. Indeed, it is true that Eckhart in this respect comes close to Hegel's notion of the Absolute as "subject" (*Subjekt*)—as well as "substance" (*Substanz*)—and as pure "negativity" (*Negativität*) (see *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, pr. §§ 5–6). However, the medieval German writer always integrates his occasional employment of such modes of thought within the broader framework of an ontology which remains Platonic On this question, see Émilie Zum Brunn, "Dieu n'est pas être," in Émilie Zum Brunn, Zénon Kaluza, Alain de Libera, Paul Vignaux, Édouard Wéber, *Maître Eckhart à Paris. Une critique médiévale de l'ontothéologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), pp. 88–91 On the further question whether Eckhart was influenced by Dietrich of Freiberg in this direction see Alain de Libera: "Les 'raisons d'Eckhart'", ibid., pp. 122–125.

[46] The expression "purely hermeneutic" implies not a hermeneutic which discloses something rational or real (as in Origen or Augustine), but a hermeneutic which questions the

Here, we may pass from a consideration of intellection as simple negation to the consideration of intellection as "negation of the negation"—as Derrida would say, doubling the wager in our attempt to assess the continuing significance of Eckhart's thought.[47] It is perhaps in his use of what is more a "*quasi*-concept" than a concept in the normal sense that Eckhart extends the purely hermeneutic notion of intellection into a notion of intellection as a kind of unity-in-duality and approaches Heidegger's concept of "Ontological Difference."[48]

The "negation of negation" (*negatio negationis*) is a quasi-concept which appears in a number of passages of Eckhart but perhaps most strikingly in an extended treatment of the divine name of Unity in his *Expositio libri Sapientiae*.[49] Since this double negation itself functions in the purely hermeneutic manner, any interpretation of this function might also turn out to be open-ended—a point perhaps underlined by the abundance of different and conflicting readings in the secondary literature. We shall therefore

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meaning of the logical and ontological as such (as in Heidegger or Derrida). It is in this sense that the asymmetrical contradictories: *essence interpreted* > *interpretation without essence* have been inverted. Cf. n. 22.

[47] In now speaking of intellection as negation, it may be thought that we have shifted ground from speaking earlier of intellection as non-being. However, since Eckhart also views intellection as projective in character, negation and non-being cannot really be distinguished in this case.

[48] It also approaches Derrida's concept of *Différance*. We refer to the negation of negation as a "quasi-concept" because it is not something susceptible to logical definition—as a normal concept would be—but a device enabling the semantic manipulation of other concepts or terms. Since Eckhart's *negatio negationis* in fact operates in much the same way as does Nicholas of Cusa's *non aliud*, and may indeed have influenced the latter, it might perhaps also be denoted by the Cusan technical term "enigma" (*aenigma*). In its turn, the *non aliud* of Cusanus as a quasi-concept—and by implication the parallel in Eckhart—exhibits similarities with Heidegger's notion of "Enowning" (*Ereignis*). On the last point see Egil A. Wyller, "Zum Begriff 'non aliud' bei Cusanus," in *Nicolò Cusano agli inizi del mondo moderno*, *Atti del Congresso Internazionale in occasione del V. centenario della morte di Nicolò Cusano, Bressanone 6–10 settembre 1964*, (Firenze: Sansoni, 1970), pp. 427–429.

[49] *Expositio libri Sapientiae*, n. 144–157, *LW* II, 481.4–494. 5. Eckhart is here interpreting the biblical text: "And since it is one, it can do all things" (*et cum sit una, omnia potest*). For a detailed discussion of his argument see Wouter Goris: *Einheit als Prinzip und Ziel. Versuch űber die Einheitsmetaphysik des "Opus tripartitum" Meister Eckharts* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 218–228. Goris' treatment comes within a chapter "Die Dialektik im Einheitsbegriff" where he attacks—not always convincingly—the earlier interpretation of Burkhard Mojsisch, *Meister Eckhart: Analogie, Univozität und Einheit* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983), pp. 82–92. On the historical background of Eckhart' a double negation in discussions of the relation between sameness and otherness in Platonic thought (from Plato's *Parmenides* onwards) see Werner Beierwaltes, *Identität und Differenz* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1980). The passage we are discussing is treated on his pp. 97–104.

simply outline three moments in a possible interpretation of this passage[50] namely, *i.* where the negation of the negation is viewed as a negation concealing an affirmation, *ii.* where it is viewed as a negation enabling the semantic manipulation of other terms; and *iii.* where it implies a suspension of the law of contradiction. Although the focus of discussion now seems to shift towards the relation between negation and unity, the relation between negation and intellection established earlier continues to be in play.[51]

i. Eckhart says of this double negation that it is "negative on the verbal surface but affirmative in its deeper meaning" (*voce quidem negativum, sed re ipsa affirmativum*),[52] that it constitutes "the purest affirmation and the fullness of the term affirmed" (*purissima affirmatio et plenitudo termini affirmati*),[53] that it represents "the super-abundance that applies only to unity" (*superabundantia ... uni soli convenit*),[54] that it "signifies the purity, core, and pinnacle of being itself" (*significat puritatem et medullam sive apicem ipsius esse*),[55] and that it indicates "additionally being's 'in itself'" (*ipsum esse insuper in se ipso*).[56] Re-read in terms of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation to be mentioned in the subsequent paragraphs of Eckhart's exposition, the reference to super-abundance and unity would signify that the negation of negation here corresponds to the remaining of God in transcendent unity.[57] Re-construed in terms of Derrida's discussion of negation in the earlier part of "How to Avoid Speaking," the reference to the negation of the verbal surface and the affirmation of the deeper meaning would

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[50] The negation of the negation also appears in the *Prologus in Opus Propositionum*, in several passages of the *Expositio libri Exodi* and other commentaries, and in both the German and Latin sermons. See *POP* n. 6, 12, and 15, *LW* I/1, 169. 3–8, 172. 6–9, 175. 12–176.2; *EE* n. 74, *LW* II, 76. 13–78. 8.

[51] The connection between negation and unity on the one hand, and negation and intellection on the other is reinforced by various texts of Eckhart which stress the connection between unity and intellection. For instance, see the Latin *Sermo* XXIX "God is One" (at n. 301, *LW* IV, 267. 10–268. 4). On the relation between the negation of negation and intellection see also n. 69.

[52] *ES*, n. 147, *LW* II, 485. 5–6.

[53] *ES*, n. 147, *LW* II, 485. 6–7. At *ES*, n. 148, *LW* II, 486. 7–9 he says that it signifies that "everything that is meant by the term is present and that everything meant by the opposite term is absent" (*adesse omne quod termini est et abesse omne quod oppositi termini est*).

[54] *ES*, n. 147, *LW* II, 485. 7–8.

[55] *ES*, n. 148, *LW* II, 486. 3–5—he immediately adds that "even 'being' itself does not signify this" (*quam nec li esse significat*).

[56] *ES*, n. 148, *LW* II, 486. 5–6.

[57] See *ES*, n. 149–151, *LW* II, 487 1–488. 7. Eckhart here quotes Macrobius and Proclus as sources.

indicate that the negation of negation also parallels the "denial" (*dénégation*) of the secret = "secret" (*secret*) of the denial forming the basis of all literature.[58] The first re-reading—or re-duplication—implies proximity between the relevant texts, whereas the second produces a distance between the relevant texts through the insertion of the first relation of proximity.[59]

ii. Eckhart argues that the negation of the negation discloses the deeper meaning of the divine name of "Unity" (*unitas, unum, li unum*)—when God spoke through Moses, beyond the fact that he was one God and not many, he "intimated something deeper" (*altius aliquid insinuasse*)—and that this deeper meaning of the divine name of Unity is "indistinctness" (*indistinctum, indistinctio*).[60] In unfolding the implications of this thesis, Eckhart shows that the double negation enables the semantic manipulation of other terms applied to the deity[61] in such a manner that on the one hand, the terms unity, being, truth, and goodness represent the absolute perfection of these created properties—this is obviously a version of the medieval Aristotelian theory of the "transcendentals" (*transcendentalia*)—and on the other, that the properties denoted by these terms are absolutely identical with one another in the creator.[62]

The climax of Eckhart's discussion is an explanation of the divine name of Unity in terms of indistinctness which reads as follows in the critical edition:[63]

> With everything that is distinguished by indistinctness, to the extent that it is more *indistinct*, to the same extent it is more distinct, for it is rendered distinct by *indistinctness* itself. Conversely, to the extent that it is more *distinct*, to

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[58] Derrida, *CNPP*, pp. 557–558. Derrida here uses language very close to Eckhart's in speaking of "a negation which denies itself" (*une négation qui se nie elle-même*).

[59] In the argument under consideration, it is worth noting that Eckhart's readings of Augustine, Macrobius and Proclus (the Neoplatonists) are close to the original in meaning, whereas his reading of Aquinas (the non-Platonist) is less idiomatic. Contrast *ES*, n. 145, 149–152, *LW* II, 483. 8–10, 487. 2–488. 14 with *ES*, n. 154, 490. 7–9.

[60] *ES*, n. 144, *LW* II, 481. 6–482. 4.

[61] It is in this type of semantic manipulation that Cusanus most closely follows Eckhart. See Herbert Wackerzapp, *Der Einfluss Meister Eckharts auf die ersten philosophischen Schriften des Nikolaus von Kues (1440–1450)* (Műnster i. W.: Aschendorff, 1962), pp. 152–170.

[62] These points are not stated so clearly in the passage of *ES* under consideration. However, for the first point see *POP*, n. 15, *LW* I/1, 175. 12–176. 2, and for the second see *EE*, n. 166, *LW* II, 146. 3–6. See further Goris, *Einheit als Prinzip und Zahl*, pp. 73–74, 173–174, 215–216.

[63] This passage is so paradoxical and opaque—perhaps through an unconscious authorial intent—that some interpreters have been driven to amend the text. For example, see Goris, *Einheit als Prinzip und Ziel*, p. 225, n. 53.

> the same extent it is more indistinct, because it is rendered distinct from the indistinct by its own *distinctness*. Therefore, to the extent that it is more distinct, to the same extent it is more indistinct, and to the extent that it is more indistinct, to the same extent it is more distinct, as said above.[64]

Re-read in terms of the Neoplatonic theory of emanation mentioned in the preceding paragraphs of Eckhart's exposition, the emphasis on indistinct(ness) in the first sentence and on distinct(ness) in the second[65] would signify that the negation of the negation corresponds to the procession of God from transcendent unity to transcendent-immanent unity-in-plurality. Re-construed in terms of Derrida's handling of general structures such as *Khōra* throughout "How to avoid Speaking," the paradoxical combination of indistinct(ness) and distinct(ness) in all three sentences would indicate that the negation of the negation also corresponds to the fourfold (a)semiotic square containing the terms notated as $a_1\,\bar{a}_2$, $a_1\,a_2$, $\bar{a}_1\,a_2$, $\bar{a}_1\,\bar{a}_2$.[66] The first re-reading (re-duplication) again implies proximity between the relevant texts, whereas the second again produces a distance between the relevant texts through the insertion of the first relation of proximity.[67] But all this is to suggest only two possible readings of what Derrida would term an "abyssal" passage.[68]

iii. The passage quoted above clearly states that "to the extent that" (*quanto*) the divine name of Unity is distinct, "to the same extent" (*tanto*) it is indistinct and does not say that "in one respect" God's name of Unity is

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[64] *ES*, n. 154, *LW* II, 490. 4–8 *omne quod indistinctione distinguitur, quanto est indistinctius, tanto est distinctius, distinguitur enim ipsa indistinctione. Et e converso, quanto distinctius, tanto indistinctius, quia distinctione sua distinguitur ab indistincto. Igitur quanto distinctius, tanto indistinctius; et quanto indistinctius, tanto distinctius, ut prius*. Eckhart ends this passage by quoting as textual authorities Thomas Aquinas and John Damascene (in the translation of Burgundio of Pisa).

[65] We have inserted the italics in the text in order make these emphases clear. When writing of his negation of negation, Eckhart indeed comes closest to the *graphic* component of deconstruction.

[66] Here, $a_1\,\bar{a}_2$ could mean "distinctly indistinct," $a_1\,a_2$ "distinctly distinct", $\bar{a}_1\,a_2$ "indistinctly distinct," and $\bar{a}_1\,\bar{a}_2$ "indistinctly indistinct."

[67] See note 69.

[68] It also represents, with respect to its internal structure, what Derrida calls a *mise-en-abîme* ("placing in the abyss"). Other possible readings would point out i. that *distinct* means both "different from" and "transcendent of" while indistinct means both "identical with" and "immanent in," and that the meaning shifts within the three sentences; ii. that three possibilities of God's relation to the creature are envisioned: *1*. God is distinct from (i.e. transcends) creation, *2*. God is indistinct from (i.e. immanent in) creation, *3*. God is both distinct and indistinct from (i.e. simultaneously transcends and is immanent in) creation.

distinct and "in other respect" it is indistinct. Therefore, Eckhart's double negation involves—at least when applied on its most basic level—a suspension of the law of contradiction.[69] This last feature connects the two aspects of the quasi-concept already discussed, since the negation concealing the affirmation implies the suspension of the law, while the suspension of the law allows the negation to perform the semantic manipulation of other terms—a series of associations typical of the non-discursive mode of thinking which Eckhart had discovered in the Neoplatonic tradition.[70] Having been brought again to the sphere of *hermeneutics*, we can better understand an otherwise obscure statement by Eckhart. At one point, he says that "unity adds nothing further to being, *not even conceptually*, but only according to negation" (*li unum nihil addit super esse, nec secundum rationem quidem, sed secundum solam negationem*).[71] In other words there is neither ontology nor logic at work here—there is *only* hermeneutics.

[69] The manner in which the fourfold structure of (in)distinctness represents a *dialectical* unfolding within the activity of intellect cannot be discussed in detail here, although a full understanding of the metaphysical status of this structure cannot be achieved without reference to this question. The passages most relevant to such a discussion would be *Serm.* IV. 1, n. 28, *LW* IV, 28. 5–8 where a dialectic of indistinct and distinct is applied both to God and to man, and *EE*, n. 117, *LW* II, 112. 7–15—read in conjunction *Exposition of the Book of Genesis*, n. 115, *LW* I/1, 270.5–272. 6—where a further dialectic of similarity and dissimilarity is introduced and the epistemological aspect becomes more prominent. On the intellectual character of the fourfold structure see Mojsisch, *Meister Eckhart. Analogie, Univozität und Einheit*, pp. 86–88.

[70] When contradictory terms are competing for the same predicative position—for example, in the case of negations which are simultaneously affirmations, of properties which are simultaneously in the creator and in the created, and of divine properties which are identical with one another—a semantic shift in one or both of the opposed terms becomes necessary. On non-discursive thinking in Neoplatonism see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 152–183.

[71] *ES*, n. 148, *LW* II, 486. 2–3.

2.4. FROM THE ONE TO THE BLANK

Damascius

Of the three "architectural models" of Negative Theology constituting the event-place structure of "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." part *II*: paradigm *A*. Plato, paradigm *B*. Pseudo-Dionysius and Meister Eckhart, and paradigm *C*. Heidegger, Derrida characterized the first as Greek, the second as both Greek and Christian, and the third as neither Greek nor Christian. The time has now arrived for us to concentrate on the last of these architectural models although, given that we are attempting to investigate less the topic of Neoplatonism *and* Derrida than that of Neoplatonism *after* Derrida, our attempt at a comparative reading of the ancient and modern textualities might be conceived as following a diagonal rather than a parallel trajectory. Now if the twentieth-century writer Heidegger is neither Greek nor Christian—a characterization that would require qualification in another more appropriate context—, the same can be said of the late classical thinker Damascius. From the historical viewpoint, Damascius rather obviously stands outside the Greek and Christian traditions, having come from Damascus in the modern Syria and presided over a philosophical school closed by the Christian authorities. From the philosophical viewpoint, he stands outside these two traditions in a more radical way, having presented an absolutely unique challenge to the "onto-theological" assumptions on which both depend.[1] For both these reasons, we will substitute Damascius for Heidegger and, on occasion, read Damascius *as* Heidegger in articulating our philosophical response to the third Derridean paradigm of Negative Theology.[2]

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[1] For a convenient short introduction to Damascius' life and work see Gerd Van Riel, "Damascius," in *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. L.P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 667–696.

[2] A promising beginning in the task of bringing these two thinkers into dialogue has been made by Laurent Lavaud, "L'ineffable et l'impossible. Damascius au regard de la déconstruction," in *Philosophie* 96 (2007), pp. 46–66. After sketching Derrida's critique of "negative theology" in his essay "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations," Lavaud investigates the two questions: *1*. Whether Damascius escapes the metaphysical schema criticized by deconstruction (pp. 51–62); and *2*. To what extent Damascius' aporetic method approaches the method of deconstruction (pp. 62–66). The present writer agrees with Lavaud's conclusions that

The diagonal movement to be implemented by our intertextual strategy of reading Derrida's paradigm *C* might be understood as consisting of three phases. This movement of writing or reflection will begin by summarizing Derrida's account of the Heideggerian post-phenomenological analyses of Being, Time, and *Dasein*, immediately adding a brief note on Damascius' comparable doctrine of the self-constituted soul and its intellectual travail.[3] The basis for juxtaposing textual materials hitherto imagined to be heterogeneous—and for introducing a *philosopheme* of which Derrida himself was obviously unaware—is established in the next phase of the strategy. In the course of his essay, Derrida remarks that he will limit himself to the question of how to avoid speaking *of Being*, when addressing Heidegger's thought, and notes the common essentiality of Avoiding and of Being. This comment will form the starting-point of an extended analysis[4] of Damascius' doctrine of the Ineffable—which is really an *anti*-doctrine—and of the peculiar senses of both Avoidance and of Being[5] intimated there. Our movement of writing or reflection will conclude[6] by considering the extent to which Derrida's self-restriction to the question of how to avoid speaking of *Being* and his view of the common essentiality of Avoiding and Being is not only illuminated by Damascius' thought but illuminates that of Heidegger.

Derrida's discussion of paradigm *C* is explicitly divided into two main parts and a postscript, the first main part containing a general discussion of Heidegger's treatment of the nihilation of nothingness, the mood of anxi-

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a. there is a similarity between the manner in which the Ineffable is beyond the oppositional structure of originating and derived in Damascius and that in which the Impossible is beyond that of possible and impossible in Derrida (pp. 58–60); but that *b*. Damascius adheres to traditional metaphysical assumptions, and therefore differs from Derrida, in maintaining an irreversible hierarchy of terms graded according to value (pp. 62–64). However, for the present writer's disagreement with Lavaud's analysis at crucial points see below notes 198 and 205.

[3] In utilizing Derrida's discussion of Heidegger as a starting-point in the earlier part of this chapter, we will not comment on the accuracy of Derrida's reading of his chosen source. However, it is probably worth noting here that Derrida's interpretation does not take account of certain crucial writings (*e.g. Contributions to Philosophy, Mindfulness*) that became widely available only from the 1980s onwards. In fact, the lack of such textual resources explains certain passages in which Derrida—with commendable frankness—admits that he does not understand Heidegger's thought.

[4] p. 125 ff.

[5] In actual fact, it is Damascius' doctrine of the *Ineffable* rather than his doctrine of Being that will be studied, since this provides a closer analogy with Heidegger's subject-matter. However, some remarks on Damascius' notion of *Being* will be ventured in the final section of this chapter.

[6] p. 154 ff.

ety, the transcendence of *Da-sein*, and the primacy of the question.[7] Here, a reading of the essay *What is Metaphysics?* is used to introduce Heidegger's notions that an experience of "the Nothing that itself nihilates" (*das Nichts selbst nichtet*) is the basis of all negative discourse. More precisely, the experience of anxiety puts us in relation to a "negating" (*Nichtung*) that is neither "annihilation" (*Vernichtung*) nor "denial" (*Verneinung*), but which reveals the "strangeness" (*Befremdlichkeit*) of "what is" (*das Seiende*) as "the wholly other" (*das schlechthin Andere*), and opens up the possibility of the question of Being for *Dasein*.[8] Given that this structure delineated in *What is Metaphysics?* is also characterized as transcendence—a term with both Heideggerian and Platonic resonances—, Heidegger's reference elsewhere to two Platonic intertexts is considered highly significant by Derrida. In *On the Essence of Ground*,[9] Heidegger had observed that the notion of transcendence that he was elaborating was approached by Plato in speaking of that which is "beyond Being" (*epekeina tēs ousias*) in the *Republic*, while similarly in *Introduction to Metaphysics*,[10] he had noted that Plato perhaps vaguely surmised but did not fully comprehend the same notion in speaking of "place" (*khōra*) in the *Timaeus*. Derrida refrains from pursuing either of these arguments in greater detail,[11] merely calling his reader's attention to the passage beyond beings and the notion of negation implied in the first discussion and to the movement towards Being and the notion of the wholly other suggested by the second, noting the extent to which these ideas seem innovative with respect to both the Greek and the Christian traditions of negative theology.[12]

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[7] For the second part of paradigm *C*—which is of less direct relevance to our current project—see the comments on pp. 154–155.

[8] Derrida, *How To Avoid Speaking: Denials*, p. 122 / *Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations*, p. 585—Derrida himself introduces the German citations.

[9] See Martin Heidegger, *On the Essence of Reasons*, trans. T. Malick (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), pp. 93–97 for the passage to which Derrida refers. See also note 29 below.

[10] See Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 66 for the passage to which Derrida refers.

[11] However, he does briefly note Heidegger's further development of the second interpretation in *What is Called Thinking?* Here, the etymological connection between *khōra* ("place") and *khōrismos* ("separation") forms the basis of an argument to the effect that Plato had on the one hand, intimated that the separation between "beings" (*das Seiende*) and "Being" (*Sein*) was a kind of place but on the other hand, failed to relate this diversity of places to the "difference" (*Unterschied*) and the "fold of duplicity" (*Zwiefalt*) (*HTAS*, p. 123/*CNPP*, p. 585). In other words, Plato had suggested but not fully grasped what Heidegger elsewhere terms the ontological difference between Being and beings.

[12] *HTAS*, pp. 122–123/*CNPP*, p. 585.

This last observation with regard to Heidegger's interpretation leads, with a slight displacement of the discourse, to a further point of relevance to the non-Greek and non-Christian character of paradigm *C*. According to Derrida, his predecessor always maintained that the notion of a Christian philosophy was as impossible as squaring the circle because Christian thinkers failed to observe a crucial distinction. This is between theology in the sense of onto-theology, constituting a study of the supreme Being, and dealing with *Offenbarkeit* or the possibility of Being to reveal itself—this is better termed "*theio*logy"—and theology in the proper sense, constituting a science of faith, and dealing with *Offenbarung* or the manifestation of the God of theology.[13] The distinction is illustrated by comparing a reference in "Hegels Concept of Experience" to the supreme being or the divinity, which is also "with a curious ambiguity" called being *qua* being or simply Being, with another reference in *Being and Time* to the "more originary making-explicit" of the being of man in relation to God starting from the "meaning of faith."[14] Nevertheless, despite his diagnosis of the failure of Christian philosophy and by implication also of Greek philosophy, Heidegger himself remains submerged in both those modes of thinking.[15] This simultaneous rejection and utilization of onto-theology by the German philosopher will remain the explicit or implicit theme of Derrida's discussion of paradigm *C* in the essay "How to Avoid Speaking?"

At this point, Derrida notes that the problems behind Heidegger's distinctions are immense, and that one could follow through the latter's writings the threads of discussion that have already been recognized: the notions of revelation and the promise, of the gift and the *es gibt*, and of the untranslatable *Ereignis*, all of these profoundly displacing the question of Being and its transcendental horizon. However, Derrida decides instead to concentrate on the main problem suggested by the title of his own essay, and in so doing immediately expands the initial question "How to Avoid Speaking" into the further question "How to Avoid Speaking *of Being*" whose two components: *1*. Avoiding and *2*. Being are said to have a "common essentiality."[16]

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[13] *HTAS*, pp. 123–124/*CNPP*, p. 586.

[14] *HTAS*, p. 123, n. 25 (p. 139)/*CNPP*, p. 586. The references are to Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1977), p. 179 (= "Hegel's Concept of Experience," in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. J. Young and K. Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 146) and *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1977), intro I, § 2, p. 10 (= *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), p. 30).

[15] *HTAS*, p. 123/*CNPP*, pp. 585–586.

[16] *HTAS*, p. 124/*CNPP*, p. 587 *essentialité commune*.

Now before considering how the double question here announced undergoes further development by Derrida himself, it may be illuminating for us to bear it in mind while making a diversion onto the Neoplatonic track.[17]

Damascius could perhaps be described as the Heidegger of antiquity.[18] A fundamental structure underlying his thought is our dynamic relation to a *quasi*-first principle[19] that is either merely intimated in his text[20] or explicitly labelled "the Ineffable" (*to aporrhēton / to arrhēton*) there,[21] the former approach being more common.[22] The quasi-first principle is sometimes

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[17] The most substantial previous study on the relation between Heidegger and Neoplatonism in general is Jean-Marc Narbonne, *Hénologie, Ontologie, et* Ereignis (*Plotin-Proclus-Heidegger*), (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001). This author draws attention to many important parallels between the two sets of ideas and generally finds the Heideggerian formulations philosophically deficient in comparison with the Neoplatonic ones. A particularly extensive discussion is devoted to the more historical discussions of Platonism in *Contributions to Philosophy* in order to illustrate Heidegger's failure to grasp the nature of the transcendence of Being advocated by Plotinus and his successors. Although in approaching the matter from the traditional viewpoint of historical criticism one must concede Narbonne's general point, it is possible to enact a more philosophical confrontation between the two sets of ideas and come to a totally different result. This second type of approach forms the basis of the present chapter.

[18] This radical suggestion will be substantiated by my argument to follow. Some similarities between Heidegger and Damascius have been noted in the past. See John Dillon, "Damascius on the Ineffable", in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 78 (1996), pp. 120–129 who cites some earlier comments by Dorothea Frede.

[19] We employ the term "*quasi*-first principle" because, although Damascius frequently refers to a first principle in the normal way, he will occasionally question the application of the notion of "principle" to that of which he speaks. In order to capture the effect of this duality of approach and especially that of the second discoursive strategy, it will be necessary for us to refer sometimes to the "first principle," sometimes to the "*quasi*-first principle," introducing further terminology as the context requires. See note 51 and pp. 125–126.

[20] For example, see Damascius: *De Principiis, Traité des premiers principes*, ed. L.G. Westerink, trans. J. Combès (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986–1991) I. 39. 5–14; I. 56. 1–19.

[21] See *DP*. I. 8. 6–12; I. 9. 11; I. 10. 22–24 for *aporrhēton* and *DP* II. 3. 1; II. 11. 2–3; II. 11. 24; II. 13. 16; II. 14. 5–6 for *arrhēton*. As noted by Alessandro Linguiti, *L'ultimo platonismo greco. Principi e conoscenza* (Firenze: Olschki, 1990), p. 18, n. 11, Damascius prefers the term *aporrhēton* when referring to his first principle, the second term being used more often in connection with the second principle—the One—and various subsequent principles. Both terms have a connotation of "secrecy" (i.e. something one *should* not utter as well as *cannot* utter) that Damascius seems keen to emphasize, *aporrhēton* seemingly having been used exclusively in this sense. Moreover, *aporrhēton* has the advantage of verbal similarity with the term *aporrhōx* ("flux") that is applied to Matter, i.e. the last derivation from the *quasi*-first principle. See note 156.

[22] Damascius places "the Ineffable" above "the One" (*to hen*) that typically functions as the first principle in ancient Platonism from the time of Plotinus onwards, and has on this account acquired the greatest celebrity in the minds of historians of philosophy. On his own admission, he was here revising the doctrine of his immediate predecessors Syrianus and

referred to as (the) "nothing" (*ouden*)[23] or "the totally non-existent" (*to mēdamēi mēdamōs on*)[24] and, although this nothingness receives important qualification as "not nothing" (*mēde toutou ontos, to ouden*)—in the sense that "nothing" is normally the denial of Being, whereas this nothing is the denial of the One[25]—or else as "beyond the totally non-existent" (*epekeina toutou*)[26]—"nothing" signifying either superiority or inferiority to being, with this nothing being understood in the former sense[27]—, the apparent vacuity of the quasi-first principle is indicated by references to the possibility of our "walking in the void" (*kenembatein*) as we attempt to write about it.[28] It is important to realize that Damascius' quasi-first principle must be understood as having a "reality" of some peculiar kind, given that it is contrasted with absolute nothingness,[29] that it is explicitly treated *as* a first principle, and that it is the object of religious awe.[30] However, the parallels between Heidegger's and Damascius' approaches to Nothingness are striking given that, for the latter, our human relation to this Nothingness is disclosed by a kind of mood characterized as "travail" (*ōdis*) and a kind of questioning called "reversal" (*peritropē*).[31]

Now, Damascius' notion of the human soul as self-constituting exhibits certain similarities with Heidegger's idea of *Dasein* as self-*grounding*.[32]

Proclus and returning to the teaching of Iamblichus in certain respects. For a discussion of Damascius' revolutionary turn and the philosophical reasons for it (apparently a desire to establish the transcendence of the First in a more radical manner) see Linguiti, *L'ultimo platonismo greco. Principi e conoscenza*, pp. 15–21.

[23] See *DP* I. 18. 9–21.

[24] For example, *DP* I. 18. 11–12.

[25] *DP* I. 18. 9–13.

[26] sc. *tou mēdamēi mēdamōs ontos*.

[27] *DP* I. 18. 15–21—and by implication the totally non-existent being understood in the latter sense. Cf. *DP* I. 16. 1–4.

[28] For example, see *DP* I. 5. 19–20; I. 7. 24–I. 8. 3; I. 16. 10–15.

[29] See below pp. 126, 137–138, and n. 191.

[30] See below p. 49.

[31] See below pp. 146–147.

[32] Use of this phrase simplifies Heidegger's position which can be found stated more fully in the following passages. At *BT* II. 2, § 58, pp. 329–331 a general notion of grounding is set forth. *Dasein* is said to be "the ground of its potentiality-for-being" (*der Grund seines Seinkönnens*), being ground*ed* in the sense of being "thrown" (*geworfen*) into certain possibilities but ground*ing* in the sense of "projecting" (*entwerfen*) itself onto those possibilities. The tension between these two moments is described as a kind of "nullity" (*Nichtigkeit*) whereby *Dasein* is released "from" (*aus*) the ground—it does not choose the range of possibilities in which it finds itself—in order to be "as" (*als*) this ground [*SZ*, pp. 284–285]. This passage assumes implicit associations of grounding with the temporal ecstasies of past and future, and with the notion of transcendence which are rendered explicit at *ER*, pp. 105–119. Here

According to the emanative theory of causality to which Damascius' subscribes, all metaphysical principles in descending order from Being and beings through Intellect and intellects to Soul and souls are "self-constitutive" (*authupostata*) in character.[33] This term indicates that the process in which each subsequent principle derives from and is differentiated from its immediate prior—a process often described as consisting of a "remaining" (*menon*), a "proceeding" (*proion*), and a "having-proceeded" (*proelēluthos*)[34]—has certain peculiar features. First, the process as a whole is determined primarily according to the cognitive character of its third phase.[35] Second, the process linking the prior and subsequent principle can be considered *a*. as taking place entirely on the side of the subsequent principle,[36] *b*. as mirrored by an analogous process internal to the subsequent principle itself.[37] Third, the cognitive character of the third phase produces an identification of the linking and internal processes.[38] The parallel between

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Dasein's grounding is distinguished into three types: *a*. the projecting of world, *b*. the preoccupation with beings (an "ontic" (*ontisch*) moment), and *c*. the questioning resulting from the disparity between *a* and *b* (an "ontological" (*ontologisch*) moment). At Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy* (*of Enowning*), trans, P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999) § 173, p. 209 [GA 65, p. 296] the distinction between the self-constituted principle—such as we find in Damascius—and his own self-grounding *Dasein* is clearly shown. Here, the metaphysical "Da-sein" is characterized as "a completely actual and extant being itself" (*das ganze wirklich vorhandene Seiende selbst*)—e.g. as thingly, animal, human, or temporal—whereas the post-metaphysical *Da-sein* is "itself the being of the t/here … the openness of a being as such in the whole" (*selbst das Sein des Da … die Offenheit des Seienden als solchen im Ganzen*). On grounding in Damascius and Heidegger see also pp. 154–155.

[33] See *DP* II. 44. 9–45. 12 for self-constitution of Being; *DP* I. 52. 16–53. 28 for self-constitution of intellect; and *DP* I. 33. 15–34. 8 for self-constitution of Soul.

[34] This represents a formulation peculiar to Damascius of the general later Neoplatonic doctrine of remaining, procession, and reversion. For a full discussion of the theory together with its aporias see *DP* II. 117. 4–134. 25.

[35] See *DP* II. 131. 11–14.

[36] See *DP* II. 88. 11–89. 8. Cf. *DP* I. 3. 25–4. 9 and I. 86. 22–87. 4.

[37] See *DP* II. 127. 12–16 and II. 128. 7–130 5.

[38] See *DP* II. 130. 6–17. For a more detailed discussion of self-constitution in Damascius see Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, pp. 125–128 and 143–150. See also Joseph Combès, "Proclus et Damascius," in *Proclus et son influence. Actes du colloque de Neuchâtel, juin 1985*, eds. G. Boss and G. Seel (Zürich: Éditions du Grand Midi, 1987), reprinted in Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes*, [1st ed.], pp. 255–256 and Joseph Combès., "Damascius, ou la pensée de l'origine," in *Gonimos. Mélanges offerts à L.G. Westerink* (Buffalo, New York: Arethusa, 1988), reprinted in Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes*, [1st ed.], pp. 291–292. Combès shows that Damascius allows the process of self-constitution to begin at the level of the henad called "the Unified" (*to hēnōmenon*) which, by reverting upon the One, through the henads of the

Damascius' notion of the self-constituting human soul and Heidegger's notion of the self-grounding *Dasein* is particularly striking at the point where the activity of the self-constituting human soul, being ultimately derived from the Ineffable, is manifested in the form of continuous questioning.[39]

According to Damascius, it is a movement of transcend*ing* rather than a movement to a transcend*ent* state that represents the dynamic relation of the self-constituting human soul to the *quasi*-first principle.[40] This is the implicit conclusion of his argument to the effect that what is relatively unknowable according to excellence is superior to what is absolutely knowable, and what is absolutely unknowable superior to everything else,

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One-All and the All-One, proceeds to a triad of intelligibles, intelligibles-and-intellectuals, and intellectuals. This doctrine differs from the comparable teaching of Proclus who began the process of self-constitution at the level of the intellectual.

[39] —the technical term for such (frequently insoluble) questioning being "aporia" (*aporia*). For the theory regarding the latter see *DP* I. 8. 12–I. 9. 3. For examples of its application see *DP* I. 9. 10–10. 4; I. 16. 5–17; I. 18. 9–13; I. 21. 18–20. For the further association with "reversal" (*peritrepesthai*) see pp. 146–147.

[40] The issue of *Da-sein*'s transcendence (= transcending) is taken up here because of Derrida's emphasis on the notion in *HTAS*, pp. 122–123/*CNPP*, p. 585. However, it should be noted that Heidegger tends to explore the actual term "transcendence" (*Transzendenz, Übersteigung*) in works written shortly after *Sein und Zeit* or in later writings where there is a direct textual engagement with traditional metaphysics. For a summary of the main issues see *CP* §110, pp. 151–152 where the four senses of transcendence occurring separately or in combination in the history of philosophy are said to be: *a*. ontic—that of the Creator with respect to creation in Christian thought; *b*. ontological—that of the general—in the sense of the Aristotelian catgories or medieval *transcendentalia*; *c*. fundamental-ontological—that of *Da-sein* in Heidegger's own early work; and *d*. that of a subject with respect to its object in Cartesian epistemology [GA 65, pp. 216–218]. An account (*i*) of Heidegger's own earlier notion of transcendence [= *c*. above] together with a critique (*ii*) of Platonic transcendence can be found in Heidegger's *The Essence of Reasons*. Regarding *i*, Heidegger defines transcendence as the basic constitutive feature of *Da-sein* that happens prior to all behaviour (*ER*, pp. 35–37). Given that transcendence includes the notions of surpassing towards something and of surpassing something else, we can say that *Da-sein* surpasses towards "world" (*die Welt*), and surpasses "the totality" (*die Ganzheit*) of beings (*ER*, pp. 39–41). Moreover, since world is defined as man's relation to the totality of beings (*ER*, p. 83), transcendence can be defined as "Being-in-the-World" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) (*ER*, p. 41). Regarding *ii*, Heidegger considers Plato's Good as an example of transcendence (in the sense of the "beyond" (*epekeina*)). He points out that Plato's notion of the Good can be interpreted as the transcendence of *Da-sein* insofar as the notion of "for the sake of" (*hou heneka*) is included in it—Heidegger here interpreting this in terms of *Da-sein*'s projection—yet cannot be interpreted in this manner insofar as the Platonic Forms retain their status as "the being of beings" (*das Seiende am Seienden*) (*ER*, pp. 93–97). For a more extensive discussion of transcendence (and specifically with reference to temporality and freedom) see Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. M. Heim (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), §§10–13, pp. 136–216 [GA 26].

although the quasi-first principle "does not even possess that property of being most elevated" (*mēde to huperteron echēi*) which we attribute to it as a "conventional attribute" (*homologēma*).[41] In other words, the notion of superiority and therefore of transcendence as such arises through the soul's self-constitution. Now since what is described here constitutes the ultimate stage in a process of argumentation where the human soul attempts to express the Ineffable, this process beginning either with the premise that what is without need of the lower is superior to that having such need or with the premise that what has need of the higher is inferior to that having no such need,[42] the parallel between Damascius' and Heidegger's notions of the movement of transcending seems particularly striking.[43]

One could perhaps argue that the analogies between Heidegger's discussion of the nihilation of nothingness and the transcending of *Da-sein* and Damascius' treatment of the nothingness of the Ineffable and the transcending of the self-constitutive are rather loose.[44] The best reply to such an objection will be a more thorough analysis of Damascius' notion of the Ineffable beginning at the point where he might even be understood as formally tackling Derrida's question: "How to Avoid Speaking of Being?"

But before passing on to that question, it should be noted that Damascius' treatment of the human soul actually reflects Heidegger's handling of *Dasein* in ways that are too complex to be explored adequately in the

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[41] *DP* I. 14. 1–19. For a similar denial of supreme status to the One—the first principle following the Ineffable—see *DP* I. 37. 13–38. 11. For denial of both transcendence and immanence with respect to the quasi-first principle see *DP* I. 21. 7–16 and I. 61. 1–6.

[42] See *DP* I. 27. 1–I. 39. 14 and I. 39. 15–I. 56. 19 respectively.

[43] However, when Damascius speaks in this context of "projecting an axiom" (*axiōma proballein*)—see *DP* I. 27. 11–14 and I. 33. 15–34. 8—he is not describing the projecting-open of Being to which Heidegger often refers but something more specific.

[44] With regard to the question of transcendence in particular, the analogy between Heidegger and Damascius is probably restricted to the points enumerated above. One should especially recall Heidegger's statement in *BT*, intro. II, § 7, p. 62 [*SZ*, p. 38] that Being is "the *transcendens* pure and simple" (*das transcendens schlechthin*) together with his explanation in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, rev. ed. 1982), § 22, pp. 318 and 324–325 [GA 58] whereby temporality is said to be the condition of possibility of transcendence and therefore of understanding Being, this temporality being an original time constitutive of *Dasein* rather than the derivative time-flow associated with beings. Therefore the reciprocal relation between Being and *Dasein* which Heidegger bases on the notion of an ecstatic-horizonal unity of temporalizing is quite different from Damascius' unilateral relation between the transcendent and the human soul based on the participation of the temporal in the atemporal. This difference remains despite Damascius' heightened emphasis upon certain temporal aspects of the human soul (see below).

present discussion of negative theology.[45] We will simply note here that the "partial soul" (*merikē psuchē*) described in Damascius' *Commentarius in Parmenidem* has its own specific mode of being—resulting from its status as a self-constituted principle albeit of a relatively inferior kind—, and that this mode of being is characterized by the intrusion of an otherness that destabilizes the relation between its higher and lower parts.[46] This soul has what might be termed a logical structure in containing as its higher part that according to which it is one, many, and being and as its lower part that according to which it is non-one, non-many, and non-being, and also what might be termed a temporal structure in containing as its higher part that according to which it is non-temporal and as its lower part that according to which it is temporal. Of particular importance is something called "the instantaneous" (*to exaiphnēs*) that is contrasted with "the 'now'" (*to nun*) as something "coming from unseen and transcendent causes" (*ek tōn aphanōn kai exēirēmenōn aitiōn hēkon*) is contrasted with "the present of time" (*ho enestōs chronos*).[47] This mediates the oppositions not only within the soul's higher structure but also between the higher and lower structures themselves—the latter opposition being affected by the destabilizing otherness mentioned above—and also mediates not only the logical form of the opposition within the higher structure and between the higher and lower structures but also their temporal form. Especially because of this mediation, Damascius can conclude that the partial soul cannot be divided into moments of one and non-one and non-temporal and temporal: in short, cannot be divided into the "being" (*ousia*) and "becoming" (*genesis*) that represents the traditional duality of Platonic thought.[48] Apart from the fact that certain details of this argument come close to dissolving the

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[45] For a careful analysis of the human soul's structure according to Damascius see Joseph Combes, "Damascius, lecteur du *Parmēnide*." *Archives de philosophie* 38 (1975), reprinted in Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes* [1st ed.], pp. 75–81 and Joseph Combès, "Négativité et procession des principes chez Damascius," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 22 (1976), reprinted in Combès, *Études néoplatoniciennes* [1st ed.], pp. 109–114.

[46] Called "the others" (*ta alla*) in the language of Plato's *Parmenides*.

[47] Damascius, *Commentarius in Parmenidem, Commentaire du Parménide de Platon*, ed. L.G. Westerink, trans. J. Combès (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002–2003) IV. 33. 10–15.

[48] See *CParm*. IV. 10. 19–11. 8. This imparts a significance peculiar to Damascius to the doctrine that the human soul descends as a whole which is shared by both Proclus and Damascius and explicitly opposed to the teaching of Plotinus. A few years after Combès' pioneering studies, these issues were brought to public attention by Carlos Steel, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius, and Priscianus* (Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1978), pp. 79–116. See especially Steel's discussion of the "instantaneous" on pp. 98–102.

metaphysics of presence that Heidegger sees as coextensive with European thought, the non-temporal / temporal character of the partial soul in Damascius can be said to have much in common with the ecstatic-temporal character of *Dasein* in Heidegger,[49] and Damascius' notion of the soul's instantaneity much in common with Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*'s "moment of vision" (*Augenblick*).[50]

Now Damascius' approach to the Ineffable[51]—in which he tries to avoid speaking not only of the Ineffable itself, but also of the "One" (*hen*), the "One-All" (*hen panta*), the "All-One" (*panta hen*), and certain other principles derived from it—is illustrated by the discussion that begins *De Principiis*.[52]

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[49] See note 44.

[50] See Heidegger, *Being and Time* II. 3, § 65, p. 376 (*SZ*, p. 328) and II. 4, § 67, p. 388 (*SZ*, p. 338).

[51] Given the inherent difficulties of the subject-matter, it may be useful to sketch the boundaries of the discussion of Damascius' Ineffable that will constitute the main body of this chapter. It is clearly possible to interpret this Ineffable in a manner not conditioned by any historical or disciplinary criteria (e.g. by explaining it in terms of the modern cosmological theory of the "black hole."). However, our discussion to follow will interpret the Ineffable strictly within the context of the philosophy and theurgy of late ancient Platonism. One should here distinguish *1*. What the Ineffable *is*; and *2*. How the Ineffable is *expressed*. Regarding *1* (status of the Ineffable), the Ineffable might be treated as something static. For example, as *a*. an ultimate limit (cf. Dillon, "Damascius on the Ineffable," pp. 120–121); or as *b*. an ultimate transcendence (cf. Lavaud, "L'ineffable et l'impossible," p. 65). However, Damascius' treatment actually suggests something more dynamic. For example, as *c*. an ultimate tension (cf. Bréhier, "L'idée du néant et le problème de l'origine radicale," pp. 278–280), or as *d*. an ultimate directionality (see ibid., pp. 278–279). In what follows, we will argue that the Ineffable as an ultimate directional tension also exhibits a shift from a "constative" mode (where one can *say* what the Ineffable is in an *explanation*) to a "performative" mode (where one can *show* what the Ineffable is by an *operation*). The need for such a shift was perceived by Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie, et* Ereignis, pp. 157–158 with respect to Proclus' "One". Against the background of such a shift, it will be possible to argue that the Ineffable *a*. is represented by its own relation to Nothingness (cf. Bréhier, ibid., pp. 248, 279–280), *b*. can be shown through the operation of an (a)semiotic square composed of negation, double-negation, and silence and mapped onto a directional tension of power, or *c*. is represented by its own theophanies of the One, One-All, All-One, and Unified (cf. Combès, "Damascius ou la pensée de l'origine," pp. 286–287, 290–291). We will concentrate on the discussion of *b*. on pp. 130–142. Regarding *II* (expression of the Ineffable), the Ineffable may be suggested in a variety of ways ranging between *a*. being stated only indirectly and *b*. being not mentioned at all, it being probably better to exploit one or more of these options rather than import the word "Ineffable" into the discussion of texts that do not include the Greek *aporrhēton*. In what follows, we will employ with respect to the more constative contexts the periphrases "quasi-first principle" and "ultimate referent of discourse" and with respect to the more performative contexts the grapheme [ ].

[52] *DP* I. 1–26. 8—Certain passages in the section of the same work from *DP* I. 27. 1–61. 6 are also relevant. In analyzing the argumentation of the earlier part of *De Principiis*, we will follow an order of discussion most appropriate to the question of negative theology

A careful linguistic and conceptual analysis reveals that the Ineffable functions as a kind of ultimate referent to which his discourse continually points, this ultimate referent being approached either directly or indirectly.[53]

The direct approach to the ultimate referent of discourse applies the term "the Ineffable" (*to aporrhēton / to arrhēton*)—signifying something of which one is neither able nor permitted to speak[54]—to that ultimate referent. This name of obviously negative form is sometimes explicitly introduced in order to emphasize the contrast between the ultimate referent of Damascius' discourse and the first principle to which Plato refers in texts such as the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*.[55] However, it is most frequently associated with specific aspects of the process of metaphysical derivation.[56] In certain passages of *De Principiis*, the Ineffable is explicitly named and treated as the beginning of a procession. For example, Damascius admits the possibility of the Ineffable producing other things "ineffably as the Ineffable" (*hōs aporrhēton aporrhētōs*),[57] while denying a relation between one Ineffable and many "ineffables" (*aporrhēta*) analogous to that between one Unity and many unities.[58] Elsewhere, the Ineffable is explicitly said to underlie the things that have already proceeded.[59] In the *Commentarius in Parmenidem*, he establishes the premise that "the Ineffable is in all things" (*to aporrhēton en pasin*) in order to prove that, since it is impossible to maintain that the absolutely non-existent is similarly omnipresent because that would undermine the foundation of all beings, the Ineffable must be distinguished from

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introduced by the Derridean intertext, rather then that most relevant to the question of ultimate causality raised by Damascius' own text. For an analysis of this part of *De Principiis* from the latter viewpoint see Joseph Combès, "La théologie aporétique de Damascius," in *Néoplatonisme, Mélanges offerts à Jean Trouillard = Les cahiers de Fontenay* 19–22 (1981), pp. 125–139 reprinted in Combes, *Études néoplatoniciennes* [1st ed.], pp. 199–221. This article distinguishes a series of *a priori* aporetic arguments (denying the notions of principle, unity and totality, transcendent, knowable) (pp. 206–216) and a series of *a posteriori* aporetic arguments (based on the notions of absence of need, presence of need, and containment) (pp. 216–220).

[53] That which we henceforth term "ultimate referent of discourse" was previously assigned the temporary label of "(quasi-) first principle." See note 51.

[54] See note 21.

[55] See *DP* I. 9. 10–13; I. 23. 16–17.

[56] For examples of such metaphysically-charged usages see *DP* II. 23. 2–3 "the totally ineffable principle" (*hē aporrhētos pantēi archē*) and II. 23. 14–15 "the single and ineffable principle" (*hē mia kai aporrhētos archē*).

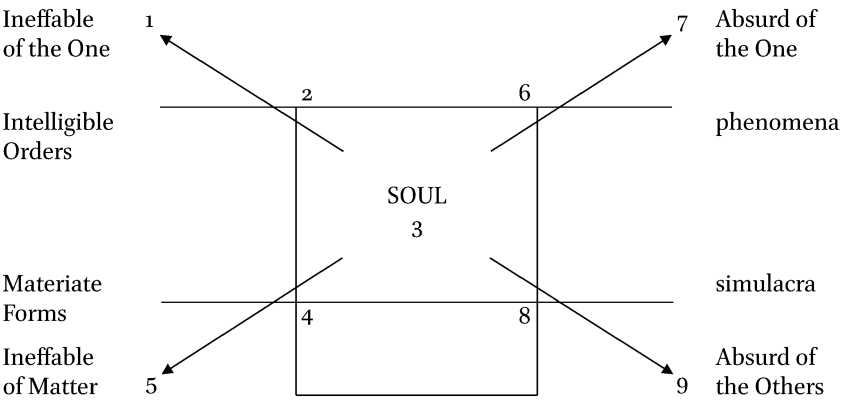
[57] *DP* I. 8. 6–11.

[58] *DP* I. 21. 23–22. 6.

[59] See *DP* I. 23. 22; I. 24. 4–5; I. 25. 2–3: I. 25. 14–18; I. 26. 3–5.

the absolutely non-existent.[60] In one passage of *De Principiis*, the Ineffable is explicitly named and treated as the end of a reversion. Thus, Damascius suggests that Plato in the *Parmenides*, by means of his demonstration that the One is "unknowable and ineffable" (*agnōston te kai arrhēton*), wished to elevate us "ineffably to the Ineffable that we are now discussing" (*aporrhētōs eis to nun dē prokeimenon aporrhēton*).[61]

The context in which one must understand the function of the Ineffable in Damascius' metaphysical system is a highly innovative interpretation of the nine hypotheses in the second part of Plato's *Parmenides*. As shown by the excellent analyses of Joseph Combès, the hypothetical structure as a whole may be seen as pivoting around hypothesis #3 (neither all nor nothing and both all and nothing = the human soul) in two groups: first, the group formed by hypothesis #1 (ineffable Nothing according to excess: the One),[62] hypothesis #2 (the All of the One-Being), hypothesis #4 (the All of the materiate forms), and hypothesis #5 (ineffable Nothing according to defect: Matter);[63] and second, the group formed by hypothesis #7 (Nothing of absurdity with respect to the One), hypothesis #6 (the All of phenomena), hypothesis #8 (the All of phantasms), and hypothesis #9 (Nothing of absurdity with respect to the Others). Combès represents these relationships with the following diagram:



[60] *CParm*. IV. 117. 9–13.
[61] *DP* I. 9. 1–9. Cf. *DP* I. 10. 16–22.
[62] Strictly speaking, the Ineffable of the One (see below).
[63] Strictly speaking, the Ineffable of Matter (see below).

It is possible to translate this overtly and legitimately "structuralist" presentation by Combès to a higher level of abstraction.[64] On this basis, hypothesis #3 will correspond to the combined (*a1 a2*) and the neutral (*ā1 ā2*) terms of an (a)semiotic square based on the semes "all" / "nothing" of which the positive term (*a1 ā2*) and the negative term (*ā1 a2*) correspond to further squares [X, Y]. Moreover, hypothesis #1 will correspond to the negative term (X—*ā1 a2*), hypothesis #2 to the combined term (X—*a1 a2*), hypothesis #4 to the positive term (X—*a1 ā2*), and hypothesis #5 to the neutral term (X—*ā1 ā2*) of a further square based on the semes effable / ineffable and excess / defect, while hypothesis #7 will correspond to the negative term (Y—*ā1 a2*), hypothesis #6 to the combined term (Y—*a1 a2*), hypothesis #8 to the positive term (Y—*a1 ā2*), and hypothesis #9 to the neutral term (Y—*ā1 ā2*) of a further square based on the semes non-absurd / absurd and excess / defect). These relationships might be represented with the following diagram:

X				*Y*		
One	ineffable	*ā1*		Absurd of One	absurd	*ā1*
	excess	*a2*			excess	*a2*
One-Being	effable	*a1*		Phenomena	non-absurd	*a1*
	excess	*a2*	both All and Nothing *a1 a2*		excess	*a2*
			a1 ā2 All PARTIAL SOUL Nothing *ā1 a2*			
			ā1 ā2			
Material Forms	effable	*a1*	Neither All nor Nothing	Simulacra	non-absurd	*a1*
	defect	*ā2*			defect	*ā2*
Matter	ineffable	*ā1*		Absurd of Others	absurd	*ā1*
	defect	*ā2*			defect	*ā2*

In the light of this interpretation of the nine hypotheses of the *Parmenides*, it is possible to see that Damascius' thought undergoes a palpable shift from speaking of the ultimate referent of discourse as a unity of some kind

[64] This translation will make it possible for us to understand the scheme more readily in terms of the emanative system. See below p. 148.

(excluding duality) to speaking of it as a kind of "One-Fold" (an irreducible unity-duality).[65] The shift becomes particularly noticeable when the Ineffable is said to be in proximity[66] either to "the One" (*to hen*) treated primarily in hypothesis #1[67] or to "the Others" (*ta alla*) treated primarily in hypothesis #5[68] of the *Parmenides*.[69] Proximity to the *One* is indicated in passages where the One is said to be "near to the complete reversal" (*engus … tēs pantachēi … peritropēs*) of the Ineffable[70] and where the Ineffable is suggested "through all-perfect negation" (*dia tēs pantelous apophaseōs*) of the One[71]—in other words, the Ineffable / One (unity-duality) relation is activated at the point where thinking collapses. It is also indicated in passages where the One is said to be the "token or hidden mark" (*gnōrisma … sunthēma*) of the Ineffable[72] or an especially potent "name or concept as though a symbol" (*onoma … noēma hōsper sumbolon*) of the Ineffable[73]—in other words, thinking is replaced by symbolization in activating the (unitary-dual) Ineffable / One relation.[74] Proximity to the *One* and to the *Others* is indicated in two sets of passages dealing with Matter—distinguished from both the Ineffable and absolute non-being as "like the last echo" (*hōs eschaton apēchēma*) of the Ineffable.[75] In the first set of passages, Matter is said to be produced by the Ineffable *together with* the One, given that Matter is "established according to that which has proceeded from the ineffable principle itself" (*kat'auto*

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[65] We will reserve discussion of Heidegger's similar recourse to a "one-fold" until later. See below pp. 158–159.

[66] For this mode of expression see *DP* I. 84. 18–19 where the One is said to be "obscured by the closeness" (*tēi geitonēsei epilugazesthai*) of the Ineffable.

[67] The one is also discussed in hypotheses ##2, 6, and 7.

[68] The Others are also discussed in hypotheses ##4, 8, and 9.

[69] Damascius himself focuses on the (humanly insoluble) problem of the relation between unity and duality by remarking—here specifically in connection with Iamblichus' theory of the first two principles—at *DP* II. 6. 20–21: "A *god* would know the complete truth about such great matters" (*to men oun alēthestaton theos eideiē peri tōn tēlikoutōn*).

[70] *DP* I. 85. 1–3—the Ineffable is here referred to as "the First" (*to prōton*).

[71] *DP* II. 11. 16–19—the One is here suggested by the immediate context.

[72] *DP* II. 10. 25–26—cf. *DP* II. 11. 8 "symbol" (*sumbolon*). It should be noted that it is not the *name* "One" that is the mark or symbol but the *One* itself.

[73] *DP* II. 23. 9–12.

[74] Proximity of the Ineffable to the One is also indicated in two further contexts: namely, where the One is said to be "ineffable" (*arrhētos*), this property being obviously derived from *the* Ineffable—for example, see *DP* II. 22. 11–23. 6—and where the One is discussed in such a way that the Ineffable is not mentioned at all—see below pp. 144–146.

[75] *CParm*. IV. 72. 4–6—the Ineffable is here called "the First" (*to prōton*). On the derivation of Matter from the Ineffable see also *CParm*. I. 15. 12–14 and IV. 69. 19–21. At *CParm*. IV. 68. 1–4 Matter is described as an "efflux" (*aporrhōx*) of the Ineffable.

hestōsa to ap'autēs tēs arrhētou archēs proelthon)[76] and each such proceeding term produces according to its own "partial ineffable" (*merikon aporrhēton*) or according to the "substantialized trace" (*ichnos sunousiōmenon*) of the Ineffable within it.[77] In the second set of passages, Matter is said to be produced by the Ineffable *in opposition to* the One, given that Matter is "the other ineffables, so to speak, of the Ineffable" (*hoion alla … tou aporrhētou aporrhēta*)[78] and is "the image of that which is not even one" (*tou mēde henos eikōn*) and has no "communion" (*koinōnia*) with the One.[79] Now if the Ineffable is simultaneously the source of maximal indistinctness when considered together with the One and of maximal distinctness when considered in opposition to the One, then it transforms earlier Neoplatonic metaphysics by decisively shifting the emphasis from simple unity to unity-duality and from unidirectional to bidirectional emanation.[80]

Prominent among the indirect approaches to the ultimate referent of discourse in the earlier part of *De Principiis* is a method of pointing to this referent with a kind of conceptual topology as "beyond the One" (*tou henos epekeina*),[81] the One being the name applied to the first principle in Plato's *Parmenides*. At other times, Damascius indicates this referent with a kind of grammatical indefiniteness as simply "that" (*ekeino*), or "it" (*auto*),[82] using a method of naming the first principle typical of Plotinus' *Enneads*. However, one of the most striking features of the earlier part of *De Principiis* is the avoidance of speaking of the ultimate referent altogether by constructing a kind of discourse of circumlocution. The adoption of this mode of discourse turns out to be very useful in explaining how Plato in the *Parmenides* appears to mention the One of Plotinus but to avoid

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[76] *CParm*. IV. 71. 3–6—the "proceeding term" is here apparently the One-All and subsequent henads. It is because of Matter's derivation from the Ineffable via the henads that it is described as "not without subsistence" (*ouk anuparktos*) at *CParm*. IV. 68. 1.

[77] *CParm*. IV. 71. 7–9—the Ineffable is here again called "the First." Cf. *CParm*. IV. 65. 14–17, IV. 76. 6–9; IV. 78. 7–9 where many different levels of matter are distinguished and correlated with different levels of henad. The higher levels are associated more with affirmations of the One and lower levels of matter more with negations of the Ineffable.

[78] *CParm*. IV. 71. 5–6. Cf. *CParm*. IV. 68. 1–5 where Matter is said to be "opposed as 'Others' to the One" (*antidiaireitai goun hōs alla pros hen*).

[79] *CParm*. IV. 77. 17–21—the Ineffable is here again called "The First."

[80] It also shows that emanation process contains within itself the contrary aspects of continuity and cleavage. See below p. 148 and n. 194.

[81] *DP* I. 5. 21–22; I. 18. 4–5; I. 19. 4–5; I. 23. 16–17. Cf. I. 20. 5 "not even one" (*mēde hen*).

[82] See *DP* I. 11.15; I. 12. 20; I. 14. 20; I. 16. 19; I. 24. 17 for the former and *DP* I. 12. 1; I. 13. 17; I. 14. 1; I. 15. 6 for the latter.

mentioning the Ineffable of Damascius.[83] In order to denote the effect of this circumlocution in an abbreviated form, we will utilize the graphic form [ ][84] rather than import the technical term "the Ineffable"[85] where the latter is not actually present in the text.[86]

The method of speaking of the ultimate referent by introducing the negations of various predicates that might be applied to it might also be considered as an instance of the indirect approach.[87] This represents an application to Damascius' Ineffable of the so-called "negative theology" traditionally applied to the One or Good in the philosophies of Plotinus and Proclus. As we shall see, the traditional method of correcting affirmative statements about the first principle is modified by Damascius in order to supplement an *apophatic* theology based on the use of single negations with an *aporetic* theology based on the use of double negations.[88]

Among the attributes denied of the [ ] by Damascius that have been most often denied of the first principle in earlier Platonists,[89] "knowability"

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[83] For further discussion of this point see pp. 144–145. The same idea had already been exploited by Proclus—albeit not with respect to the First Principle—as a means of explaining why Plato did not mention certain teachings of the theurgists or "Chaldaeans." See pp. 52–53. Damascius exploits it on many occasions where he begins a discussion of the Ineffable but ends the same discussion by talking about something else. For example, see *DP* II. 7. 1-II. 10. 18 where a consideration of the Ineffable leads to a series of observations about the subsequent principles of the One-All and the All-One.

[84] It is perhaps worth noting that in one passage Damascius introduces the ultimate referent with the words "that of which we *write* these things" (*hou tauta graphomen*). See *DP* I. 16. 14. This allusion to the process of writing—where one might perhaps expect a reference to speaking—relates either to the historical fact that Damascius is no longer involved in the activity of teaching orally or to a methodical principle that writing is a better indication of the referent than is speaking.

[85] At *DP* I. 10. 22–24 Damascius denies that the term "ineffable" is applicable to the ultimate referent of discourse.

[86] For an illustration of such usage see the text quoted on pp. 141–142. The French translation of Damascius introduces the explicit term "l'ineffable" into the text on many occasions where the corresponding Greek version merely employs some kind of circumlocution with respect to the ultimate referent.

[87] *DP* I. I. 22. 15–19. Negation as used in this context can be considered as representing an "indirect" approach first, because it indicates the nature of *one* thing by excluding a potentially infinite number of properties of *other* things; and secondly, because it is understood as having the complete silence that can only signify indirectly as a kind of zero-degree of itself. For the latter see below pp. 145–146.

[88] See below pp. 144, 146–147.

[89] In the next few pages, we will consider first, those attributes most often denied of the first principle by earlier Platonists and secondly, those attributes less often denied of the first principle by such thinkers For a useful repertory of texts summarizing the attributes denied of the first principle by Damascius and the relation between his selection and that of earlier

(*to gnōston*) seems to be particularly important.[90] Within the earlier part of *De Principiis*, the question of applying the negative attribute of "unknowability" (*to agnōston*) to the ultimate referent of our discourse[91] is clarified by distinguishing that which is unknowable to us, that which is unknowable to Intellect itself, and that which is unknowable to the henads, and by stating that the ultimate referent is unknowable on all three levels.[92] This conclusion is established as follows. If the [ ] were knowable, *1*. it would "be included in the All" (*estai tōn pantōn*)—something that has already been excluded by earlier arguments—; and *2*. knowledge would "embrace it" (*perilēpsetai auto*). The latter is excluded on the grounds that *a*. the ultimate referent has no "delimitation" (*horos*); *b*. knowledge is of either "things that are" (*onta*), "things that subsist" (*huparchonta*), or "things that participate in unity" (*henos metechonta*), whereas the ultimate referent is none of these; and *c*. "the known" (*to gnōston*) is relative to "knowing" (*gnōsis*) and "the knower" (*to gignōskon*), whereas the ultimate referent has no relation to other things.[93] It should be noted that in developing the question of applying the negative attribute of unknowability to the [ ] in the first part of this treatise, the interpretation of the negative "not-*x*" as implying the comparative "above-*x*" is always assumed.[94]

Damascius' denial of the attribute of knowability to the ultimate referent of discourse is innovative to the extent that certain types of knowable are distinguished in which the connotation of cognition is supplemented or replaced by the connotation of *interpretation*. These types of knowable include *to huponoēton*[95]—literally, "that which is known beneath" i.e. as

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writers see Salvatore Lilla, "La teologia negativa dal pensiero greco classico a quello patristico e bizantino," in *Helikon* 31–32 (1991–1992), pp. 3–72.

[90] Among such attributes, that of "being / substance" (*on, ousia, einai*) obviously has pride of place. Because of the special difficulties surrounding the interpretation of this term in Damascius, however, we will reserve discussion of the denial of this attribute until the end of the present chapter. See pp. 162–167. In any case, it should be noted that *knowability* and Being are virtually inseparable ideas in later Greek philosophy. See the remarks of Émile Bréhier, "L'idée du néant et le problème de l'origine radicale dans le néoplatonisme grec," in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 26 (1919), reprinted in Bréhier, *Études de philosophie antique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955), pp. 254–255.

[91] Damascius also associates the negative attribute of "unknowability" with the traditional first principle—the One—and certain subsequent principles. For the One see *DP* I. 19. 17–20. 8.

[92] *DP* I. 18. 22–19. 5.

[93] *DP* I. 19. 5–16.

[94] In addition to the previous passage see also *DP* I. 6. 7–11 and I. 14. 4–19.

[95] See *DP* I. 14. 21, I. 56. 5. Cf. *DP* I. 6. 10, I. 14. 14–16 (*huponoia* in same sense).

a hidden meaning—which we might translate as "object of insight," and *to perinoēton*[96]—literally, "that which is known around" i.e. as an associated meaning—which we might translate as "object of surmise."[97] Damascius' denial that the [ ] is knowable in either of these senses normally forms the culminating stage of an argument in which the denial of successive attributes implying progressively greater transcendence leads finally to denial of the attribute of transcendence itself.[98]

Some of the most interesting discussions in Damascius' entire philosophical work are those in which attributes are denied of the [ ] that have been less often denied of the first principle by earlier Platonists.[99] The following passage provides a useful introduction to this question:

> Therefore it should be called neither 'principle' nor 'cause' nor 'first' nor 'before all' nor 'beyond all.' Even less should one address it in a hymn as 'all.' In short, one should approach it neither with hymn nor concept nor surmise.[100]

In the next few pages we will consider in more detail how the attributes of "principle / cause," "first," and "beyond" are denied of the ultimate referent of his discourse, passing on to those of "unity" and "truth."[101]

The treatise *De Principiis* actually begins with an analysis of the notion of "principle" (*archē*) in general, and it is only towards the end of this discussion that Damascius will specifically deny that the [ ] is a principle.[102] We may perhaps divide this complex discussion into three phases of which the second and third overlap. In the first phase of Damascius' discussion, the notion of a principle of all things is shown to produce *aporia*. One can posit that the principle of all things *1*. is either *a*. beyond all things or *b*. included among them, and that all things *2*. are either *a*. together with the principle or *b*. subsequent to it. According to option *1 a* combined with *2 b*, the all will not really be the all, whereas according to option *1 b* combined with *2 a*,

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[96] This term appears only in the negative-compound form at *DP* I. 39. 10.

[97] Cf. *to epinoēton* at *DP* I. 56. 15–16.

[98] *DP* I. 14. 20–21 (*oude huponoēton*—end of argument beginning at I. 14. 1) and I. 39. 10–11 (*aperinoēton*—end of argument beginning at I. 39. 5).

[99] See n. 89.

[100] *DP* I. 4. 15–17 *oude ara archēn, oude aition ekeinēn klēteon, oude prōton, oude ge pro pantōn, oud'epekeina pantōn. scholēi ge ara panta autēn humnēteon. oud'holōs humnēteon, oud'ennoēteon, oude huponoēteon*.

[101] These denials will ultimately be contradicted by affirmations, producing the famous "reversal" (*peritropē*). The *performative* aspects of this reversal will constitute one of the essential manifestations of the Ineffable. See pp. 149–153.

[102] In at least one passage, Plotinus had denied that the One was a principle. See *Enn*. VI. 5 [31] 6.

the principle will not really be a principle.[103] Leaving things here apparently in suspense, the second phase of Damascius' discussion deals with what we might term the quest for the principle of all things.[104] One aspect of this quest is concerned with defining the principle of all things on the one hand, as "before" (*pro*) and as "beyond" (*epekeina*) all things[105]—these expressions both having the connotation of "superiority to-"—; and on the other hand, as "non-relational" (*ascheton*)[106]—specifically as transcending the relation between opposites. Damascius here inserts complementary arguments to the effect that the One described by Plato cannot itself be the principle of all things.[107] Since the One has the All as its opposite—even if it is a "simplicity absorbing the all" (*panta katapiousa haplotēs*) in the sense that it is itself "all before the all" (*panta … pro tōn pantōn*)—, it cannot be prior to the All in the non-relational sense described above.[108] A further aspect of the quest for the principle of all things is the *quasi*-proof "that there is such a principle" (*einai archēn*)[109] through our "ineffable co-perception" (*arrhētos sunaisthēsis*) of a higher Ineffable[110] associated with the so-called reversal of our discourse.[111] Yet another aspect is the *quasi*-demonstration of "how one ascends" (*tis hē anabasis*) to such a principle[112] through the aforesaid reversal of our discourse[113] whereby the "names and concepts of our travails" (*onomata … kai noēmata tōn hēmeterōn ōdinōn*) are recognized as such.[114] In the third phase of Damascius' discussion, the principle of all things is shown to be *not* a principle. In fact, the extensive discussion of the [ ] preceding the One as a principle is supplemented by briefer references to it as not a

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[103] *DP* I. 1. 4–2. 20. For a more detailed analysis of this section see Dillon, "Damascius on the Ineffable," pp. 124–126.

[104] At *DP* I. 4. 13–15 Damascius introduces this discussion by saying that we "divine" (*manteuesthai*) such a principle. The terminology is notable because it circumvents the normal technical vocabulary of cognition, and because it introduces a certain temporal connotation of futurity. Cf. *DP* I. 7. 15–16 where Damascius speaks of having "not yet" (*oupō*) found the principle.

[105] *DP* I. 3. 24, I. 4. 9–12, I. 4. 14.

[106] *DP* I. 6. 16–17. Cf. I. 3. 25–4. 9 and I. 7. 1–3.

[107] The arguments have an added dimension in that the unitary is, according to Damascius, concomitant with the knowable. See *DP* I. 6. 7–9 and I. 7. 18–20.

[108] *DP* I. 3. 21–4. 9. Cf. *DP* I. 4. 18–5. 1; I. 7. 5–17; I. 11. 6–7.

[109] *DP* I. 4. 14 and I. 6. 10.

[110] *DP* I. 6. 13–16.

[111] *DP* I. 8. 12–20.

[112] *DP* I. 5. 18–22.

[113] See pp. 122 and 146–147.

[114] *DP* I. 8. 14–16.

principle,[115] as both a principle and not a principle,[116] and as neither a principle nor not a principle,[117] this alternation providing a classic illustration of the reversal of discourse of which he constantly speaks.[118]

The earlier part of *De Principiis* outlines a method of examining "that which is posited as first" (*to prōton tethen*)[119] that is said to be comparable to the method of investigating the One pursued in the *Parmenides*, although Damascius' method moves from the expressible to that which cannot be expressed whereas Plato moves from the hypothesis of the One to its consequences.[120] The statement that the ultimate referent of discourse is that which is *posited as* first—a phrase repeated exactly a few lines later[121]—seems to imply something besides its reduction to merely hypothetical status. This is confirmed by a passage later in the treatise where Damascius considers the question whether the attributes of "principle / cause," and "first" can be assigned to the *One*.[122] He concludes that, since these predicates would imply that the One is "in need of things subsequent to it" (*endees … tōn meth'heauto*)[123]—admittedly only the highest trace of need just as by a reverse analogy matter would have the last echo of need[124]—, and since the One "qua unity, is without need" (*hēi men hen, anendees*),[125] such attributes must be denied with respect to the One.[126] It is an argument of this kind applied *a fortiori* to whatever is beyond the One that probably underlies Damascius' remark that the [ ] is beyond the opposition of "first and after the first" (*prōton kai meta to prōton*).[127]

Although the passages asserting that the ultimate referent of discourse is not "beyond" (*epekeina*) other things[128] do not expand upon the reasoning

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115 *DP* I. 6. 20–22; I. 7. 1–4; I. 39. 6–7.

116 *DP* I. 55. 9–13—the argument is that it is not a principle in the senses of being a principle *of x*, but is a principle in the sense of being a principle of everything simply.

117 *DP* I. 22. 17–18—the actual term here is "cause" (*aition*) rather than "principle."

118 It is also a further example of an (a)semiotic square.

119 *DP* I. 27. 1.

120 *DP* I. 27. 1–10.

121 *DP* I. 27. 7.

122 *DP* I. 37. 3–39. 4.

123 As he explains further at *DP* I. 37. 22–24 for something to be a principle / cause requires things deriving from it, and for something to be a first requires things subsequent to it.

124 *DP* I. 38. 11–14.

125 *DP* I. 38. 17.

126 Damascius' meaning here seems to be that for something to be a principle / cause there must also be an effect, and that for something to be first there must be a second, and so forth.

127 *DP* I. 7. 1–4.

128 See above p. 122.

underlying this statement—a subtle reinterpretation of Plato's dictum concerning the Good beyond Being is clearly involved—, it is perhaps possible to explain what Damascius has in mind by comparing another passage speaking of the transcendence of the ultimate referent.[129] This passage notes the appropriateness of positing that which cannot be combined or coordinated with anything else and is "so transcendent that, in reality, it does not even have the property of transcendence"[130] after cognition and surmise have run their course. It would be problematic to posit something simply transcendent at this point, argues Damascius, because such transcendence is always "with respect to something" (*tinos*): in other words, it has "a relation to that which it transcends"[131] and also "a coordination in a certain precedence."[132] In conclusion, the word "transcendence" itself, since it does not speak the truth concerning the really transcendent referent of discourse which is "already simultaneous and coordinated" (*hama gar ēdē kai suntetagmenon*), must here be prefixed with negation.[133]

Among all the attributes denied of the [ ] by Damascius that have been less often denied of the first principle, "unity" is perhaps the most immediately obvious.[134] In several passages of *De Principiis*, we find a simple contrast between the ultimate referent of discourse and the One.[135] For example, Damascius explains how "that which is not even one" (*to ge mēde hen*)—here clearly pointing to the ultimate referent—is even more unknowable than is the One itself.[136] Moreover, the possibility of considering the former as "nothing" leads, through an etymological explanation of

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[129] *DP* I. 21. 3–14.

[130] *houtōs exērēmenon, hōste mēde to exēirēmenon echein kat'alētheian*. The same paradox is subsequently expressed in the form of an injunction: "the transcendent … let it be posited as not transcendent" (*exēirēmenon … mēd'exēirēmenon hupokeisthō*).

[131] *schesin … pros to hou exēirētai*.

[132] *en proēgēsei tini syntaxin*.

[133] Careful attention to the language of this passage ought to show that Damascius is not denying the transcendence of the ultimate referent of discourse in order to advocate its immanence. In any case, there is a parallel argument against immanence when it is argued at *DP* I. 61. 1–6 that the Ineffable is the one container of all things in such a way that "it is not even one, not even container, and indeed not even ineffable" (*mēde mian einai, mēde periochēn, mēde einai mēde aporrēton*).

[134] In several passages, Plotinus had denied that the One was a unity. See *Enn.* V. 9 [9] 3 and VI. 7 [37] 38.

[135] It is important to note that in later Neoplatonism unity = divinity. Therefore for Damascius, the term "God" (*theos*) is applicable to the One but not to the [ ]. The point is established at *DP* I. 19. 17–20. 4.

[136] *DP* I. 20. 5.

ouden ("nothing") as a combination of *ou* ("not") and [*h*]*en* ("one"), to a contrast between his *quasi*-first principle and the usual first principle.[137] In other passages of Damascius' treatise, we find a movement of ascent from the One to the ultimate referent of discourse. The author poses the rhetorical question how we can ascend above "the totally and simply one" (*pantēi hen kai monon hen*)—also called the principle and the first—without "walking in the void" (*kenembatein*).[138] This ascent is exemplified at least in a sequence of arguments dealing with the "absence of need" (*to anendees*) and "presence of need" (*to enendees*) in higher and lower principles respectively.[139] Damascius does not explain precisely why the ultimate referent of discourse is "so ineffable that it is not even one, nor a container, nor even ineffable."[140] However, an assumption that "nothing simpler can be conceived" (*haplousteron ouden echomen ennoein*) than the One[141]—i.e. that unity is a kind of limit of conceptualization—seems to be the presupposition of his thinking concerning this issue.[142]

"Truth" is denied of the [ ] in at least one passage. The context is a discussion of the question whether we can "have an opinion" (*doxazein*) of the ultimate referent of discourse, and Damascius proposes the following line of thought.[143] Where "a thing is" (*pragma estin*) and there is "conformity" (*epharmozein*) between the thing and our opinion, there is "true opinion" (*doxa alēthēs*) of the thing. However, since the ultimate referent has "non-being" (*to mē einai*) and there is no conformity between the referent and our opinion, there is no true opinion of the ultimate referent.[144] Damascius' interesting but elliptical argument requires some expansion. In particular, it would follow that there are neither true nor false opinions of the ultimate referent of discourse and that—since propositions are things that are capable of being either true or false—no propositions could be formulated regarding that referent. This is perhaps what Damascius has in mind when he concludes paradoxically that: "one could say that its

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[137] *DP* I. 18. 9–13.

[138] *DP* I. 5. 1–2 and I. 5. 18–23.

[139] *DP* I. 27. 11 ff. and I. 39. 15 ff.

[140] *DP* I. 61. 3–4 *houtōs aporrhēton hōs mēde mian einai, mēde periochēn, mēde einai mēde aporrēton.*

[141] *DP* I. 5. 1.

[142] On the apparent shift in Damascius' thinking from the primacy of unity (excluding duality) to the primacy of a one-fold (undecidable unity-duality) see above pp. 128–129.

[143] One says "proposes" because the argument is subjected to a subsequent critique.

[144] *DP* I. 15. 6–12.

non-being and unknowable character are true in the sense that the truly false is true, for it is true that the latter is false."[145]

Damascius' use of the negative method has perhaps retraced the path of his predecessors in denying the attribute of knowability to the ultimate referent of discourse,[146] but has undoubtedly radicalized his predecessors' approach in his persistent denial of the attributes of principle, first, beyond, unity, and truth. Now *De Principiis* also takes the further step of denying the *denials* themselves.[147] The basic structure of this argument is provided by a passage in which the author divides "denial" into *a*. the "denial" (*apophasis*) further specified as "a certain discourse" (*logos tis*)—i.e. some kind of (psycho-) linguistic signifier or signification— and *b*. the "denied" (*apophaton*), further specified as "a thing" (*pragma*)—i.e. the real referent of the linguistic process—; and then considers the relation between denial as so analyzed and the [ ].[148] In other passages, Damascius suggests that this denial can be subdivided on the side of the referent into "that which is not in any respect" (*to mēdamēi mēdamōs on*) and "that which is not in a certain respect" (*to pēi mē on*)[149]—here corresponding to existence itself as the denied and the denied as property *x* respectively—; and again subdivided on the side of the referent into "the superior" (*to kreitton*) and "the inferior" (*to cheiron*),[150] these two subdivisions of denial apparently overlapping with one another.[151] More importantly, the division of the denial can

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[145] *DP* I. 15. 12–14 *ē to ge mē einai autou kai to mē gnōston, touto alēthes, hōs to alēthōs pseudos. alēthes gar hoti pseudos*. Although the interpretation of this argument is particularly difficult, it seems clear that Damascius is not denying *truth* of the ultimate referent of discourse in order to suggest that it is something *imaginary*. This is because the ultimate referent is suggested indirectly in hypothesis #1 of the *Parmenides*, whereas imaginary things are mentioned in hypotheses ##7 and 9. For Damascius' reading of the hypotheses see above pp. 126–128.

[146] Damascius also denies the attribute of being / substance. See above note 90.

[147] The double negation is the essential component of the "reversal" (*peritropè*) that plays a central role in Damascius' dialectic. See p. 121 above and p. 146 and note 190 below.

[148] *DP* I. 21. 15–20. There is no evidence suggesting that Damascius does not here follow the traditional distinction between "words" and "things" used by Greek grammarians and philosophers at least since the time of Aristotle.

[149] *DP* I. 15. 14–16. 1.

[150] *DP* I. 16. 1–4. The argument is expanded in *DP*. I. 18. 2–9 and I. 18. 19–21. These two distinctions play an important role in Damascius' interpretation of hypotheses ##6, 7, 8 and 9 of Plato's *Parmenides*. In fact the distinction between absolute and relative non-being is what makes it possible for him to argue (against the view of Syrianus and Proclus) that hypotheses ##6 and 8 do not deal with absurdities. On this point, see Joseph Combès, "Damascius lecteur du *Parménide*," p. 88.

[151] This would imply that there are superior and inferior modes of not existing and not

be combined with the division of the denied, making it possible for Damascius to argue that the [ ] can be approached less as "[being] nothing" (*ouden on*) or as "that which is not in any respect" (*to mēdamēi mēdamōs on*)—i.e. using single negation applicable to the One—than as "not even [being] nothing" (*mēde touto on, to ouden*) or as "the beyond of the latter" (*epekeina toutou*)—i.e. using double negation applicable to the Ineffable.[152] Moreover, this application of double denial to terms associated with superiority is now complemented with an analogous application to those associated with inferiority in order to produce a fourfold metaphysical structure.[153] Damascius establishes a pair of terms consisting of a higher and a lower kind of nothing—that which is "the other side" (*epekeina*) and that which is "this side" (*epitade*)—together enfolding another pair of terms consisting of a higher and a lower kind of unity—that which is "prior to being" (*tou ontos presbuteron*) and that which is "of matter" (*tēs hulēs*).[154] The enfolding pair obviously corresponds to the Ineffable of the One and the Ineffable of Matter, and the enfolded pair to the One and Matter themselves, and—on the basis of the argument considered above—the fourfold metaphysical structure as a whole implies that there is a single negation applicable to the One and Matter and a double negation to their respective Ineffables.[155] Arguments of this kind make it possible not only to establish an intimate relation between the denial of denial and the [ ] but also to deny the ineffability of the ultimate referent of discourse.[156]

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having properties as well as superior and inferior modes of existing and having properties. This idea will perhaps seem peculiar to many modern readers. However, the assumption seems to be that the emanative continuum can be viewed in both affirmative and negative terms (as well as in affirmative-negative terms). The function of superior and inferior modes of not existing in Damascius' doctrine of principles has been examined in detail by Bréhier, "L'idée du néant et le problème de l'origine radicale dans le néoplatonisme grec," reprinted in Bréhier, *Études de philosophie antique*, pp. 248–283. See note 191 below.

[152] *DP* I. 18. 9–13.

[153] It is important to note that the double negation of Damascius is not a self-canceling negation, i.e. a negation leading to affirmation. This is because the negation itself and the negated terms are—as clearly indicated in the present instance—ambivalent in meaning.

[154] *DP* I. 18. 15–21.

[155] This metaphysical structure can be understood in terms of Damascius' interpretation of the hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides*. See above pp. 127–130.

[156] See *DP* I. 10. 22–24 "the absolutely ineffable … one cannot even postulate its ineffability" (*to men pantēi aporrēton … mēd'hoti aporrhēton tithenai peri autou*) and *DP* I. 61. 3–4 "so ineffable that it is not even ineffable" (*houtōs aporrhēton hōs … mēde einai mēde aporrhēton*). On the ineffability of the *One*, embodying the corresponding single negation, see above pp. 119–120 and nn. 21–22.

Before examining the philosophical consequences of such a radical position on Damascius' part, we should note the one element that at least provisionally escapes the mechanism of denial.[157] This might be called the *value* of the ultimate referent of discourse. Although it nowhere seems to have become explicitly thematic in *De Principiis*, a presumption that something momentous is the pivot of all philosophical activity, even though we can say nothing about it, is determinative in the following passages. At one point, Damascius explains why we should call the ultimate referent of discourse unknowable, by saying that we find that which is above knowledge to be "more worthy" (*timiōteron*) and that which is above *all* knowledge—should it ever be found—to be "most worthy" (*timiōtaton*).[158] In other words, it is the value of the thing sought that ultimately justifies our approach to it through the method of denial. The same thought must underlie his willingness to entertain the hypothesis, when attempting to ascend beyond the One, that "it is *necessary* to utter the unutterable and think the unthinkable" (my italics)[159] Elsewhere, Damascius suggests that the One, which has in itself—in addition to ineffability—an "intimation" (*emphasis*) of opposition in which one term is "superior" (*kreittō*) to the other, derives these properties from the [ ] beyond it.[160] Here, it is presumably the value on which the differentiation of opposed terms is based rather than the differentiation itself that is so derived.

But although there is something that at least provisionally escapes the mechanism of denial, the radical conclusion that nothing can be thought or said of the ultimate referent of discourse generally remains in force. In fact, the philosophical argumentation of the early part of Damascius' *De Principiis* leads repeatedly to *silence*.[161] Given that silence played an important

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157 On the sense of "provisional" here see below p. 153.

158 *DP* I. 16. 19–17. 3. The emphasis on the futurity of the process should be noted.

159 *DP* I. 21. 5–6 *phthengesthai ta aphthenkta kai ennoein ta anennoēta.*

160 *DP* I. 56. 8–16.

161 This represents a traditional Neoplatonic notion of "silence." For example, see the passage of Proclus quoted in chapter 2.1, note 124. It seems likely that Damascius was influenced in his treatment of silence in *De Principiis* primarily by the *Oracula Chaldaica* and Proclus' interpretation of the latter. rather than by something like Valentinian Gnosticism (see below notes 131–133). Although the word *sigē* does not appear in the extant fragments of the *Oracles*, there is sufficient circumstantial evidence regarding its importance for the "Chaldaeans" in Proclus' writings. See Édouard des Places, ed., *Oracles Chaldaïques* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971), p. 225, n. 6. For a collection of citations from late ancient writers concerning silence see Lilla, "La teologia negativa dal pensiero greco classico a quello patristico e bizantino," pp. 32–33.

role in both the conceptual imagery and the ritual practice of ancient mystery religions,[162] modern readers have assumed that Damascius is exploiting the notion in a similar way. However, the text of *De Principiis* suggests that this religious background is merely a starting-point. In the next few pages, we will argue that the meaning attributed to silence by Damascius can only be grasped by a careful study of certain notions such as "travail" (*ōdis*), "reversal" (*peritropē*), "experience" (*pathos*), and "wonder" (*thauma*).[163] It will also be suggested that *De Principiis* makes an important distinction between the concept of "silence" and the reality itself. We will further argue that the conceptual framework within which Damascius approaches silence implies a transition from outright metaphysical monism to *quasi*-metaphysical dualism, and from an entirely constative to a partially performative discourse.

The most important passages dealing with silence are the following:

> [A] Therefore the One is expressible in one way and ineffable in another way. But *It* should be honored in all-perfect silence, and before that in the all-perfect ignorance that holds all knowledge as unworthy.[164]
>
> [B] And what will be the limit of discourse other than a sublime silence and an admission of knowing nothing of those things into the knowledge of which, being inaccessible, we may not lawfully enter?[165]
>
> [C] The 'it' or the 'they' do not obtain up there in the manner that such terms obtain down here. Rather, one should neither say 'it' nor 'they' nor that the [ ] is one or many. It is best to be silent, remaining in the ineffable innermost sanctuary of the soul without proceeding forth. If it is necessary

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[162] Among older classic studies of this topic see Hugo Koch, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita und seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen. Eine literarhistorische Untersuchung* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1900), pp. 108–134 and 198–260, Odo Casel, *De philosophorum Graecorum silentio mystico* (Giessen: Toepelman, 1919), pp. 144–152, and Gustav Mensching, *Das heilige Schweigen. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Giessen: Toepelman, 1926).

[163] On the important notion of "reversal" see especially the study of Sara Rappe, "Scepticism in the Sixth Century? Damascius' 'Doubts and Solutions Concerning First Principles,'" in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 36, 1998, pp. 343–347. This author provides a good demonstration of Damascius' dependence upon sceptical traditions (mediated by Alexandrian Neoplatonic doxographies) for his use of *peritropē* and certain other ideas. However, it is clear that Damascius has transported these ideas from the sceptical domain into the totally different spheres of metaphysical and religious thought (as she admits on pp. 360–362 of the same article).

[164] *DP* I. 11. 14–16 *to men dē hen houtō rhēton kai houtōs arrhēton. ekeino de pantelei sigēi tetimēsthō, kai proteron ge pantelei agnoiāi tēi pasan gnōsin atimazousēi.*

[165] *DP* I. 21. 20–22 *kai ti peras estai tou logou, plēn sigēs amēchanou kai homologias tou mēden ginōskein, hōn mēde themis, adutōn ontōn, eis gnōsin elthein?.*

to suggest something, one should employ the denials of such terms. We should say that the [ ] is neither one nor many, neither productive nor unproductive, neither causal nor un-causal. However, these denials totally reverse themselves *ad infinitum*, in some way that I cannot explain.[166]

[D] Rather, beginning from the things that are completely expressible and knowable to sensation, we will ascend to the higher things and moor our travails of truth in the silence around *It*.[167]

[E] But we should seek something that will not have need in any way whatsoever. That would be something of which one could truly say neither that it is a principle nor that it has that property—seemingly the most venerable—of being totally without need, since this property signifies superiority and transcendence of need. We do not even think that it should be called that which transcends all things, but rather that of which there is total incomprehension and total silence. Most justifiably, this would be the 'axiom' now sought by a thinking that does not utter anything but is content to utter nothing and thereby worship that sublime lack of knowledge.[168]

[F] Is the One therefore unknown in its own nature, although the unknowable is something other than the One? But the One wishes to be in itself without any other. Indeed, that which is distinguished by opposition to the knowable is the unknowable, whereas that which is beyond the One is totally ineffable, and we agree that we neither know nor are ignorant of this, being in a state of 'super-ignorance' with respect to it. And even the One is overshadowed by its proximity given that, being the closest to the sublime principle (if it is lawful to speak thus), it remains as though in the innermost sanctuary of *Its* silence.[169]

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[166] *DP* I. 22. 11–19 *ouk ara hōs ta tēide, kai ekaino ē ekeina. mallon de oude ekeino rhēteon oude ekeina, oude hoti hen oude hoti polla, alla malista men hēsuchian agein, en tōi aporrhētōi menontas adutōi tēs psuchēs oude proïontas. ei de ara anankē ti endeiknusthai, tais apophasesin toutōn chrēsteon, hoti oude hen oude polla, oude gonimon oude agonon, oute aition oute anaition, kat tautais mentoi tais apophasesin ep'apeiron atechnōs ouk oida hopōs peritrepomenois*.

[167] *DP* I. 27. 7–10 *mallon de apo tōn rhētōn pantēi kai tēi aisthēsei gnōrimōn arxamenoi ep'ekeina anabēsometha kai eis tēn peri autou siōpēn kathormioumen tas tēs alētheias ōdinas*.

[168] *DP* I. 39. 5–14 *alla ti apa zētēteon, ho mēdamōs hexei to endees mēd'hopōstioun. eiē d'an toiouton on mēde hoti archē alēthes eipein, mēd' auto ge touto, ho semnotaton edoxe legesthai, to anendeestaton. kai touto gar huperochēn sēmainei kai exairesin tou endeous. oude gar to pantōn exēirēmenon auto kalein ēxioumen, alla to pantēi aperinoēton kai pantēi sigōmenon, touto an eiē dikaiotata to nun zētoumenon axiōma tēs ennoias, oude tautēs ti phthengomenēs, alla to mē phthengesthai agapōsēs kai tautēi sebomenēs ekeinēn tēn amēchanon agnōsian*.

[169] *DP* I. 84. 13–21 *ara oun agnōston tēi oikeiā phusei to hen, ei kat to agnōston allo para to hen? to de kath'hauto bouletai einai, sun allōi de oudeni. to men dē antidiēirēmenon tōi gnōstōi agnōston, to d'epekeina tou henos pantēi aporrhēton, hoper oute gignōskein oute agnoein homologoumen, all'echein pros auto kai huperagnoian, hou tēi geitonēsei epilugazetai kai to hen. engutatō gar on tēs amēchanou archēs, ei themis houtōs eipein, hōsper en adutōi menei tēs sigēs ekeinēs*.

Considered together, these passages present an essentially constative account of silence[170] in which the distinction between silence as concept and silence as reality has no particular significance. It is important to note that silence has a *subjective* sense in passage *A* when it urges us to honor *It* in silence, perhaps in passage *B* when it speaks of silence as the limit of discourse, and in passage *C* when it urges us to be silent and remain in the innermost sanctuary of the soul without proceeding forth, but an *objective* sense in passage *D* when it refers to the silence around *It*, perhaps in passage *E* when it speaks of that of which there is total silence, and in passage *F* when it refers to the innermost sanctuary of *Its* silence.[171] One should further observe that silence is understood not only in the literal sense of absence of *speaking* in passage *B* which defines silence as the limit of discourse, but also in the metaphorical sense of absence of *thinking* explicitly in passage *C* which characterizes silence as a remaining in the innermost sanctuary of the soul without proceeding forth, and implicitly elsewhere[172] It is also important to note that silence is associated with the (non-) principle of the Ineffable in passage *A* when it urges us to honor *It* in silence, and with both the (non-) principle of the Ineffable and the principle of the One in passage *F* when it speaks of the latter as remaining in the innermost sanctuary of *Its* silence. Finally, we should observe—and here silence specifically as a *concept* comes to the fore—that silence is treated as something that transcendently negates an opposition of predicates in

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[170] In these passages "silence" is represented by the substantives *sigē* (passages *A, B, F*) and *siōpē* (passage *D*) and "to be silent" by the verbs *sigān* (passage *E*) and *hēsuchian agein* (passage *C*), the verb *sigān* occurring also in the passive voice (passage *E*). The substantive "silence" is modified be the adjectives "all-complete" (*pantelēs*) (passage *A*) and "sublime" (*amēchanos*) (passages *B* and *F*), and by the adverbial phrase "the total" (*to pantēi*) (passage *E*). Elsewhere, Damascius introduces other terminology of which examples will appear below.

[171] This objective sense of silence is prominent in texts of Proclus that Damascius must have known, For example, see Proclus, *De Philosophia Chaldaica* (*Eclogae*) 4. 210. 15 ff. (in *Oracles Chaldaïques*, ed. É. des Places (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971) where—discovering a kind of triad of unparticipated silence, participated silence, and participating word among the intelligibles in his interpretation of the oracles—Proclus speaks of "the silence that has established the word" (*hē ton logon hupostēsasa sigē*) and again of "silence" (*sigē*), "the intelligibles of which one is silent" (*ta sigōmena noēta*), and the "word" (*logos*). In this text, Proclus also refers to the highest silence as "the divinizing cause" (*hē ektheōtikē aitia*).

[172] The sense of silence as absence of thinking is also prominent in texts of Proclus presumably known to Damascius. See especially Proclus, *De Providentia* 5. 31, 54. 12–19 (in Proclus, *Trois études sur la providence* II, ed. D. Isaac (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979)) referring to "inner silence" (*intrinsecum silentium*) and *Commentarius in Timaeum* I. 303, 4–8 referring to "the soul … maintaining its silence so to speak" (*hē psuchē … siōpōsa tēn hoion siōpēn*).

passage *C* where the [ ] is said to be neither "one" nor "many," that transcendently negates a negative predication itself understood to imply transcendence in passage *E* where the Ineffable is said not to be "the without need," and that transcendently negates an opposition of predicates specified as affirmation and negation in passage *C* where the [ ] is said to be neither productive nor unproductive and in passage *F* where we are said to neither know nor be ignorant of *It*.

Damascius' various dialectical maneuvers can be mapped onto an (a)semiotic square in two ways.[173] According to a first construal ("square *X*"), *It*—identified with *double negation*—constitutes the third term of a structure consisting of *1*. a positive term ($a_1 \bar{a}_2$)—e.g. "one" or "productive"—; *2*. a negative term ($\bar{a}_1 a_2$)—e.g. "many" or "unproductive"—; and *3*. a neutral term ($\bar{a}_1 \bar{a}_2$)—e.g. "neither one nor many" or "neither productive nor unproductive." According to a second construal ("square *Y*"), *It*—identified with *silence*—constitutes the third term of a structure consisting of *1*. a negative term ($a_1 \bar{a}_2$)—e.g. "not productive" or "not knowable"—; *2*. a double negative term ($\bar{a}_1 a_2$)—e.g. "not unproductive" or "not unknowable" and *3*. a neutral term ($\bar{a}_1 \bar{a}_2$)—not further specified.[174] As we shall see, an overlapping of these two squares is central to the approach to the Ineffable in *De Principiis*.[175]

Now Damascius sometimes engages in historical discussions in order to find authority for his treatment of silence. In one passage, he compares his philosophical ascent to the One in *De Principiis* with Plato's analogous

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[173] These maneuvers would represent aspects of what Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie, et* Ereignis, p. 157 has aptly termed "une syntaxe de l'ineffable."

[174] The technique of using double negatives and relating them to silence seems to have been generalized from Proclus' discussion of the conclusion of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*. See Carlos Steel, "*Negatio negationis*. Proclus on the Final Lemma of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*," in *Traditions of Platonism. Essays in Honour of John Dillon*, ed. J.J. Cleary (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 351–368 who examines the problem raised by Plato's apparent denial of all the earlier dialectical conclusions at *Parm*. 142a and the various responses of Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus. Proclus' own solution is a kind of reduction to silence resulting from the "negation of the negations" implied by the lemma. However, we will suggest below that Damascius' approach in *De Principiis*—especially because of his substitution of the Ineffable for Proclus' One as first principle—differs significantly from that of his predecessor.

[175] It is perhaps reasonable to conclude at this point that, whereas Damascius' predecessors have tended to contrast and balance a *kataphatic* (= affirmative) and an *apophatic* (= negative) method in speaking of the first principle, Damascius himself prefers to contrast and balance an *apophatic* (= single negative) and an *aporetic* (double negative) method. Therefore, Combès, "La théologie aporétique de Damascius," reprinted in his *Études néoplatoniciennes* [1st ed.], pp. 202–203 is justified in underlining the derivation of Damascius' *aporetic* theology from the earlier *apophatic* variety.

method.[176] After quoting Plato's argument to the effect that if the One *is*, then it is not one, whereas if the One *is not*, no discourse will apply to it—including denial, name, opinion, knowledge, and so forth—, he asks: "why should we therefore seek something else beyond the ineffable [of the One]?"[177] The implication is that Plato did not need to attempt any expression of the Ineffable at this point. As Damascius goes on to argue, Plato seemed at first sight to cancel the existence of the One[178] in order to lead us to the Ineffable beyond the One in the manner that he canceled other things in order to lead to the One.[179] However, he actually "*maintains silence* in conjunction with this ascent to the One"[180] in order to preclude any misunderstanding of the One's cancellation as the postulation of deficient nothingness.[181] In a later passage, Damascius again compares Plato's philosophical ascent to the One in the *Parmenides* with his own analogous method, and again concludes that Plato did not need to attempt any expression of the Ineffable at this point.[182] Since it is the One that is the principle of discourse and knowledge, and of lives, beings, and unities, whereas the Ineffable is simply the principle of all things, Plato "had no need of a further principle in his writings."[183] Since it is of the One that everything is here denied—including name, concept, and denial itself—and not of the

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[176] *DP* I. 9. 10–22. This interpretation of Plato's avoidance of mentioning something as an indication of the latter's correspondence to the ineffable first principle should be compared with a similar interpretation of the silence of certain Orphic cosmologists at *DP* III. 160. 17–161. 3 and III. 161. 14–18. See Luc Brisson, "Damascius et l'Orphisme," in *Orphisme et Orphée, en l'honneur de Jean Rudhardt*, ed. P. Borgeaud (Genève: Droz, 1991), pp. 195–201.

[177] *DP* I. 9. 8–9 *ti oun allo ti tou arrhētou epekeina epizētoumen?* Damascius' usual position is that the One is "ineffable" (*arrhēton*) although it is subsequent to "*the* Ineffable" (*to aporrhēton*).

[178] Damascius actually says simply that Plato "cancels the One." Perhaps in order to underline the ambivalent status of the One as knowable and unknowable, Damascius fluctuates between two interpretations of Plato's philosophical move: *a*. Plato cancels the One, and *b*. Plato cancels *the existence of* the One. For the former see also *DP* II. 93. 10–12 and for the latter *DP* I. 55. 13–22, I. 64. 17–19, II. 11. 14–16, and II. 21. 22–25. With respect to *b*. Damascius here introduces a reference to Plato: *Sophist* 244b–245a in order to show that the One has an affirmative aspect in being "in itself" (*kath'hauto*) pre-existent with respect to being. See further note 181.

[179] *DP* I. 9. 10–16.

[180] *DP* I. 9. 16 *mechri tou henos anabas esiōpēsen*.

[181] The argument seems to be that Plato *maintains silence* about the Ineffable *in* the process of cancelling the One instead of establishing the Ineffable *through* the process of cancelling the One, i.e. that the silence is a manifestation rather than a result of the dialectic. This fits in with the performative aspect of Damascius' treatment of the [ ]. See below p. 150 ff.

[182] *DP* I. 55. 9–19.

[183] *DP* I. 55. 10 *ouk edeēthē allēs archēs en tois logois*.

Ineffable, Plato "made no suggestion"[184] regarding the latter. Moreover, since it is of the One that the being of the One and the process of denial are here denied—the One itself not being denied[185]—and not of the Ineffable, "what else could one add?"[186]

The fact that Plato *maintained silence* with regard to the Ineffable turns out to be particularly significant when, turning from the passages quoted earlier that provided an essentially constative account of silence in which the distinction between silence as concept and silence as reality had no particular significance, we consider some further passages that introduce a more performative notion of silence in which the distinction between silence as concept and silence as reality becomes a pivotal element.[187] In these cases, silence is connected with one or more of four important concepts.

Damascius often associates the double negativity implied by silence with "travail" (*ōdis*). In passage *D* quoted earlier, he had spoken of our ascent to higher things and our mooring of our travails of truth in the silence around *It*. These travails with respect to the Ineffable are mentioned in other passages: for example, where Damascius argues that when we apply negations to the Ineffable by saying that it is inaccessible and incomprehensible, the terms employed are "the names and concepts of our travails" (*onomata … kai noēmata tōn hēmeterōn ōdinōn*).[188] The double negativity implied by silence is also frequently associated with "reversal" (*peritropē*). In passage *C* quoted above, Damascius had indicated that we should apply neither affirmations nor negations to *It*, since the negations reverse themselves *ad infinitum*

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184 *DP* I. 55. 14 *ouden enedeixato*.

185 For the implicit argument see notes 178 and 181.

186 *DP* I. 55. 18–19 *ti an legoi tis epi pleon?* These two arguments should be compared with an interesting passage at *DP* II. 11. 14–25 where Damascius again reports Plato's avoidance of speaking of the Ineffable in the *Parmenides* and explicitly couples it with his own avoidance of commenting on the said passage. In connection with the latter he observes "but it will be more timely to investigate this elsewhere" (*alla touto men en allois eukairoteron exetazein*). This raises two interesting points: *i.* It specifically identifies avoidance of speaking with *deferral* of speaking—anticipating Derrida's favored interpretation of silence—; and ii. It introduces a clear reference to Damascius' own commentary on hypothesis #1 of the *Parmenides*—which is *not extant* or was perhaps *never written*.

187 What are here termed "constative" and "performative" aspects of the later Neoplatonic treatments of the One or the Ineffable may perhaps be compared with what Narbonne, *Hénologie, ontologie, et* Ereignis, pp. 157–158 calls the *modus explicandi* and the *modus operandi*. Narbonne rightly draws attention to the importance of this distinction for understanding the later Neoplatonic treatments of the One and the Ineffable.

188 *DP* I. 8. 12–15.

in a way he cannot explain. Other passages mention these reversals with respect to the Ineffable: for example, where he argues that when we apply negation to the Ineffable by saying that it is not at all expressible or somehow knowable, or double negation by saying that it is not even deniable, this amounts to a "total reversal of discourse and thinking" (*hē pantēi peritropē tōn logōn kai tōn noēseōn*).[189] The travail and reversal mentioned in these two sets of passages can be mapped onto the (a)semiotic square. However, whereas the Ineffable corresponded to its neutral term (*ā1 ā2*), these two notions correspond to its combined term (*a1 a2*).[190]

Without attempting to read too much into these few suggestive passages, we can at least conclude on the basis of the later Neoplatonic metaphysical system in general that within the (a)semiotic square the neutral term (*ā1 ā2*)—which Damascius' Ineffable here exemplifies—and the combined term (*a1 a2*)—here exemplified by Damascius' travail and reversal—in certain cases actually coincide. This is because of the emanative structure of reality embodying a continuum of power stretching from the highest to the lowest realities on which any given degree can be described alternatively as "neither *x* nor *y*" and as "both *x* and y," an everyday analogy for this being the temperature scale on a thermometer embodying a continuum of heat stretching from maximum to minimum on which any degree can be described alternatively as relatively hot or as relatively cold.[191]

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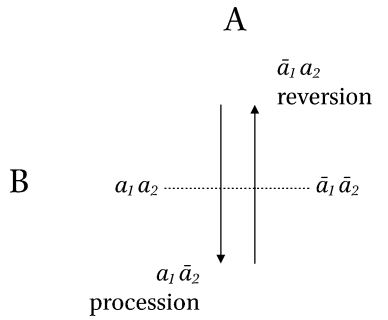
[189] *DP* I. 21. 15–20. Cf. *DP* I. 8. 12–15 and I. 26. 3–5.

[190] With respect to *ōdis* and *peritropē*, it is worth noting that both terms imply a certain duality, given that travail represents a tension between producing and not producing and reversal a tension between different directions. This is obviously connected with the facts *i*. that Damascius' notion of the Ineffable, despite the fact that it serves as the (quasi-) first principle of a monistic system, implies a certain duality—see pp. 128–129—; and *ii*. that his notion of the partial soul, which includes the element of radically disruptive otherness, is dualistic in a similar way—see pp. 123–125.

[191] The importance of the notion of a continuum of power for the understanding of both Plotinus' and Damascius' doctrines of principles was seen clearly be Bréhier, "L'idée du néant et le problème de l'origine radicale dans le néoplatonisme grec," reprinted in his *Études de philosophie antique*, pp. 248–283 although his interpretation of Damascius somewhat simplifies the true situation. Bréhier noted that in certain passages of Plotinus, both the One and Matter were described as "nothing," the nothingness of the former representing superiority and the nothingness of the latter inferiority to being. The logical status of both forms of "nothing" is identical although—because of the "opposite direction" (*direction opposée*) with respect to a continuum of power on which the abstracting subject moves, as exemplified in Proclus' later systematization of the notions of procession and reversion—their metaphysical status is different (pp. 258–259 and 266–268). According to Bréhier, the Ineffable and Nothing of Damascius are both "at the limit of the two opposite directions" (*au terme de deux directions opposées*) (p. 279), the human soul is marked by a constant striving *to*

The emanative assumption underlies all the discussions of negation and affirmation in Neoplatonic texts[192] and helps to explain why for Damascius the principle of non-contradiction and thereby the propositional structure as such is ultimately suspended between the positive term (*a1 ā2*) and the negative term (*ā1 a2*) and between the neutral term (*ā1 ā2*) and the combined term (*a1 a2*).[193]

The relation between the emanative structure and the (a)semiotic square might be represented with the following diagram:[194]



distinguish the one from the other (pp. 278–279), and "this movement itself constitutes the notion that we are able to have of the Ineffable" (*ce mouvement lui-même … constitue la notion que nous pouvons avoir de l'Ineffable*) (p. 280).

[192] The idea emerges clearly in the important doctrine originating with Syrianus and continuing among his successors that the negations of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* correlate with the affirmations of the second hypothesis by being "generative" (*gennētikai*) and "perfective" (*teleiōtikai*) of the latter. See Proclus, *Theologia Platonica* II. 5, 38. 13–39. 5; II. 10, 63 8–10 and frequently in the *Commentarius in Parmenidem*.

[193] This point can be shown by a careful analysis of the dialectical maneuvers—for example, at *DP* I. 16. 5–8—in which Damascius marks a transition from a statement that the Ineffable "is such and such" (*houtōs echein*)—which is propositional—to "our experiences with regard to *It*" (*hēmetera pathē peri ekeino*)—which is non-propositional. The same structure underlies *DP* I. 8. 12–15 where Damascius marks a transition from statements "that" (*hoti*) *It* is ineffable, inaccessible, and incomprehensible—which are again propositional—to names and concepts of "our travails" (*hēmeterai ōdines*)—which are non-propositional. Similar transitions can be found at *DP* I. 12. 13–25 where a blind man's knowledge of certain propositions leads to a knowledge of his own ignorance and *DP* I. 14. 20–15. 5 where demonstration—again, propositional—leads to silence.

[194] It is important to note that the thinking of the Neoplatonists at this point includes a further complication: namely, that the emanative *continuum* (where *ā1 ā2* is identified with *a1 a2*) is simultaneously an emanative *cleavage* (where *ā1 ā2* is opposed to *a1 a2*). This complication is necessitated by the fact that spiritual principles have not only constitution—implying continuity—but *self*-constitution—implying the cleavage. In Damascius this further paradox is elevated to maximum intensity with his doctrine that the partial soul is subject to the disruption of "the others" (*ta alla*)—see above pp. 123–124. In the figure presented above axis "A" represents the continuum and axis "B" the cleavage.

Now Damascius also associates the double negativity implied by silence with "experience" (*pathos*) and "wonder" (*thauma*). A passage quoted earlier applying negations to the Ineffable[195] goes on to identify the negations with certain experiences. These experiences—which are specified as being both "ours" (*hēmetera*) and therefore presumably subjective and also as being "around it" (*peri auto*) and therefore also objective—are mentioned in other passages: for example, where Damascius argues that when we apply negations to the Ineffable by saying that it is unknowable and so forth, "we are not reporting something *of* it but confessing our experience *around* it" (*ouk autou ti apangellomen, alla to peri auto pathos hēmōn homologoumen*).[196] The double negativity implied by silence is also associated with "wonder" (*thauma*) in at least one passage. Here, Damascius rejects the argument that, since the Ineffable is above all surmise and whatever is above all surmise is the most wonderful thing, the Ineffable must be "most wonderful" (*thaumasiōtaton*). In fact, the real wonder occurs not when we make "a certain surmise" (*ti huponoein*)—i.e. even the negative one mentioned—but "in our act of abstaining from surmising itself" (*tōi mēden huponoein autōi*).[197] The experience mentioned in the first set of passages can be mapped onto the (a)semiotic square. Here again, just as the Ineffable corresponded to the neutral term ($\bar{a}_1$ $\bar{a}_2$), experience corresponds to the combined term (a_1 a_2). However, the wonder mentioned in the second set of passages seems to present an anomaly.

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[195] *DP* I. 8. 12–15.

[196] *DP* I. 12. 18–21. Cf. I. 14. 20–15. 5 and I. 16. 5–17. It should be noted that modern interpreters have tended to interpret the *pathos* referred to in these texts as an indication of Damascius' tendency to agnosticism and subjectivism (translating *pathos* as "condition" or "state" or even "emotion" rather than "experience" as proposed by the present writer). For example, see Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence II. The Way of Negation* (Bonn: Hannstein 1986), pp. 119–122, Philippe Hoffmann, "L'expression de l'indicible dans le néoplatonisme grec, de Plotin à Damascius," in *Dire l'évidence. Philosophie et rhétorique antiques*, eds. Carlos Lévy and Laurent Pernot (Paris-Montréal, L'Harmattan, 1997), pp. 377–386 and Linguiti, *L'ultimo platonismo greco*, pp. 39–43 (the last two writers citing the earlier discussions of Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1968) I, pp. 124–129 and II, pp. 90–99 who seems to have initiated this line of thought by comparing Damascius' doctrine at this point with similar ideas in the Porphyrian *Commentarius in Parmenidem*). However, it is important to stress: *1.* that *pathos* can just as easily mean "experience," "incident," or "occurrence" (all of which implying more objectivity); *2.* that the term *pathos* is usually linked with the propositional phrase *peri auto* ("around it") which again suggests an object. Moreover, the phrase *peri auto* (which occurs with respect to the One at Plato: *Parm.* 142a (see pp. 144–145)) suggests "motion around," as noted by C. Steel (see his "*Negatio negationis*. Proclus on the Final Lemma of the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*," pp. 364–365). Thus, talk of subjectivity in this connection may be too much of an oversimplification.

[197] *DP* I. 14. 1–19.

We would like to suggest that Damascius is providing us with a very significant hint in these remarks concerning wonderful things.[198] In particular, it should be noticed that both the word "wonder" as normally used in Greek and also the grammatical form of the phrase "in the act itself" indicate events or enactments rather than the substances or objects that are mostly discussed in a metaphysical treatise. At this point, we should recall the two construals of the (a)semiotic square underlying the dialectical maneuvers of *De Principiis*: namely, that in which double negation constitutes the third term of a structure consisting of a positive term, a negative term, and a neutral term (= "square *X*"); and that in which silence constitutes the third term of a structure consisting of a negative term, a double negative term, and a neutral term (= "square *Y*").[199] Now these two squares overlap in that the third term of the first square is the second term of the second square and also in that silence is understood as a form of negation.[200] In fact, one can perhaps argue that the relation between silence and negation—at least when employed *indirectly* as seems to be the case throughout the argumentation of *De Principiis*—corresponds exactly to that between the *performative* and the *constative*, silence *showing* what something is indirectly by being silent and negation *stating* what something is indirectly by using denials,[201] silence here additionally turning from *concept* into *thing*. In conclusion, we would like to suggest that Damascius' dialectical maneuvers with the (a)semiotic square and his discussion of our wonder with respect to the Ineffable hint at a subtle shift from the constative to the performative mode.[202]

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198 The present writer's conclusions from Damascius' reference to "wonder" are different from those of Lavaud, "L'ineffable et l'impossible," pp. 63–64. Lavaud rightly points to the retention of the idea of a metaphysical hierarchy and of an epistemological ascent through that hierarchy in Damascius' use of the superlative "most wonderful" (*thaumasiōtaton*). However, the really important point in this discussion is the fact that Damascius is denying the validity of formulating a *proposition* containing this superlative, and making a transition to a performative sense of "wonder." Therefore, Damascius' method is here actually approaching that of deconstruction.

199 See above p. 144.

200 This emerges most clearly when Damascius substitutes the term "lack of speech" (*aphasia*)—which contains the *a-* of privation—for "silence." For example, see *DP* I. 15. 2–8.

201 The performative character of silence is indicated by the fact that one can indicate its nature without using any verbal signifier simply by ceasing to speak.

202 The same argument can perhaps be made with respect to our *experience* with respect to the Ineffable given that the word *pathos* can signify an "event" as well as a "condition."

The idea that a performative enactment of the Ineffable[203] is the unstated project of *De Principiis* as a whole can be supported with several arguments. First, there is a certain oddity about Damascius' procedure in first undermining the notion that the Ineffable is a principle in the early pages of the treatise, and then describing in great detail—albeit in an aporetic manner—how an entire series of subordinate principles is derived from this first principle.[204] However, Damascius' strategy makes perfect sense if the aporetic discussion is itself a performative enactment of the Ineffable. Second, the Ineffable principle is not reached at the end of a sequence of philosophical reflections or discussions—as in the case of pseudo-Dionysius' *De Mystica Theologia* which is probably influenced somewhat by Damascius—but is posited at the very beginning. However, this order of procedure makes better sense than the reverse on the assumption that the Ineffable is being enacted performatively throughout the text.[205] Third, Damascius interprets Plato's method in the *Parmenides* as being one in which the latter does not deal with the Ineffable in a constative manner by using either affirmative or negative predications—as he does in the case of the One—but in a performative manner by not mentioning it at all. Therefore, his own method in *De Principiis* can be seen as following in the footsteps of the revered ancient authority.[206] If the modern reader is tempted to object that Damascius ought to have made all this more explicit, then he would perhaps reply that such clarity would have undercut the project itself.[207]

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[203] There is a natural transition from performative enactment of silence to performative enactment of the Ineffable because silence, considered in its *objective* sense, is identical with the Ineffable. For this argument see above pp. 143–144.

[204] The peculiarity of this seems to have been noted by Van Riel, "Damascius," pp. 673–674 who goes on to remark that Damascius does not really solve any of the problems that he raises.

[205] For this reason one could perhaps argue, against the opinion of Lavaud, "L'ineffable et l'impossible," p. 65 who maintains that "Damascius échappe la métaphysique en *l'excédant* … alors que Derrida *introduit du jeu* dans les structures de la métaphysique," that Damascius *is* destabilizing metaphysical structures *internally*. Indeed, it for this reason only that for Damascius—as Lavaud rightly suggests in a previous paragraph—"l'origine échappe au règne de la présence."

[206] Of course, for Damascius as for Proclus before him, Plato's writings have to be supplemented with the even higher wisdom of the *Oracula Chaldaica*. Indeed, it is almost certainly the *Oracles* that—through their connection with theurgy—influenced Damascius in his specifically *performative* approach. On Damascius and theurgy see Philippe Hoffmann, "Damascius," in *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, ed. Richard Goulet (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1994), II, pp. 571–574 and 589–590.

[207] In this manner, *De Principiis* can be understood as as much a "hymn" (constative and performative) as a "treatise" (constative only) regarding the Ineffable, the One, and the

The performative enactment of the Ineffable in Damascius has many affinities with the performative enactment of the "Secret" in Derrida,[208] not least the facts that both establish close relations to negative theology and to theurgy and a close relation between the latter.[209] The difference between constative and performative discourse is essentially that the former attempts to state certain truths without embodying those truths in the mode of utterance whereas the latter attempts to state its truths while embodying those truths in the mode of utterance,[210] performative discourse itself being subdivisible into performatives *a*. where description is actually *identical* with enactment—e.g., the Austinian performatives "I promise," "I bequeath," etc.—and performatives *b*. where description is merely *parallel* with enactment—e.g. the Derridean performatives "Trace" and "Re-Mark," etc.[211] On this basis, Damascius' aporetic discussion of the Ineffable is probably to be understood as performative discourse (and perhaps as performative experience rather than performative utterance[212]) falling somewhere between subtypes *a*. and *b*. Now the performative enactment of the Ineffable in *De Principiis* can be seen as eluding the criteria determining the history of western metaphysics as interpreted by Heidegger since, although

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intelligibles. Damascius would here be following Proclus who described Plato's *Parmenides* at *Theologia Platonica* (ed. H.-D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–1996) I. 7, 31. 25–27 as "a hymn of the generation of the gods and of things having being in any way, beginning from the ineffable and unknowable cause of the universe" (*theōn genesis humnēmenē kai tōn hopōsoun ontōn apo tēs arrhētou kai agnōstou tōn holōn aitias*) (cf. *Commentarius in Parmenidem* (ed. C. Steel, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007–2009) VII, 1191. 34–35 describing the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* as a "hymn" (*humnos*).) The crucial elements in both Proclus' and Damascius' philosophical hymns would therefore be that we should hymn the addressee(s) using silence (cf. Proclus, *PT* II. 9, 58. 23–24 "But it is lawful to hymn its [the One's] ineffability and its uncausal causality superior to all causes with silence" (*themiton ... alla sigēi to arrhēton autou kai pro tōn aitiōn pantōn anaitiōs aition anumnein*)), and also that the addressees are things of which there is (our) silence (cf. Proclus, *PC*(*E*) 4. 210. 21ff. "the silence of the intelligibles of which one is silent" (*tōn de noētōn sigōmenōn, sigē*)). However, despite these agreements between the two thinkers, Proclus can speak of a "union *before* silence" (*hē pro sigēs henōsis*) at *PT* III. 7, 30, 7–8—a concept that the Damascius of *De Principiis* would presumably reject.

208 See Stephen Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 188–194.

209 On the connection between performativity and theurgy see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, chapter 4, notes 204, 227, and 236.

210 See Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, chapter 1, n. 15. The so-called "general structures" of Derrida are all combinations of constative and performative elements. See Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 64–65 and chapter 4, n. 229.

211 See Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, p. 190. Cf. pp. 75–76, 185–186, 189.

212 For this distinction, see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 190–191 and chapter 4, n. 232.

it does not represent an explicit rejection of the situation where Being has the definite meaning of constant presence and—in a relation of reciprocal dependence on the latter—Truth is vested primarily in predication and propositions,[213] the enactment's status as something occurring in temporal discourse and incapable of being true or false effectively renders these criteria inoperable. Moreover, when this performativity is thought in relation to the *becoming-temporal* substance of the partial soul that enacts it,[214] the confrontation between Damascius' metaphysical doctrine and Heidegger's historical analysis becomes even more decisive.

A final point should perhaps be made in connection with the discussion of silence in *De Principiis*. It was noted earlier that one element in Damascius' thinking provisionally escaped the mechanism of denial—now reinterpreted in terms of the (a)semiotic square—and we termed this residual element the *value* of the ultimate referent of discourse.[215] The idea is underlined in a passage where the [ ] that is not mentioned in the *Parmenides*[216]—is declared to be the paradigm of value.[217] Here, Damascius asks if his statements about whatever is beyond the unknowable One amount to "vain rhapsodizing" (*matēn rapsōideisthai*), and answers that these statements are "the unworthy things—if it is lawful to speak thus—of the first hypothesis."[218] But as the continuation of the argument shows, one can only know that something is unworthy on the basis of some standard of worthiness that transcends it. Therefore, if the conclusions regarding the One in the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* are deemed unworthy of that which beyond the One, then the ultimate standard of worthiness can only be the [ ] itself.[219]

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213 See chapter 2.1, notes 26 and 33 and pp. 37–42 of the present volume.

214 See above.

215 See p. 140.

216 See pp. 144–146.

217 *DP* I. 20. 7–11.

218 *DP* I. 20. 10–11 *anaxia estin, ei themis eipein, tēs prōtēs hupotheseōs*. The view of Combès (p. 141, n. 2) that the reference is *not* to the "first hypothesis" of the *Parmenides* seems incorrect in the light of what follows in the text. Moreover, the phrase "if it is lawful" suggests that the writer is conscious of venturing an unusual and audacious reading of Plato's dialogue.

219 Cf. *DP* I. 11. 14–16; I. 14. 4–9; I. 21. 20–22; and I. 39. 9–14 among Damascius' numerous references to the sublimity of the [ ]. At this point, it is worth recalling some interesting remarks in Émile Bréhier, "L'idée du néant et le problème de l'origine radicale," reprinted in his *Études de philosophie antique*, p. 255, n. 3 where he says, somewhat enigmatically, that for Plotinus, "l'Un est comme en marge des jugements de valeur." Apparently, this means that, although Plotinus frequently appeals to notions of value in discussing the One, he also denies that perfection is one of its attributes. Therefore, "l'Un ou le Bien *transcende* [my

But is this position inconsistent with Damascius' argument reported earlier that the notion of transcendence itself arises through the soul's self-constitution?[220] Given that the notion of transcendence further implies the notion of value, it would follow that the notion of value also arises through the soul's self-constitution. Moreover, if the notion of value arises through the soul's self-constitution, it would also follow that any value attributed to the ultimate referent of discourse is subject to the mechanism of denial.[221] Now this apparent inconsistency can perhaps be mitigated through the results of our most recent discussion. As we have seen in that connection, value is assigned primarily to the silence that is identified with negation through the overlapping of the two construals of the (a)semiotic square and therefore also to the structure's *performative* as well as its *constative* aspect. Therefore, it may be that the value inherent in the enactment of the structure would not itself be subject to the mechanism of denial although any statement about the value of a term in that structure would be so subject.[222]

Having been pursuing a lengthy and convoluted journey through Damascius' discussion of the Ineffable, it is now time to return briefly to Derrida's text at the point where the question "How to Avoid Speaking?" was further specified as the question "How to Avoid Speaking of Being?" and the latter's two components: *1*. Avoiding and *2*. Being were isolated.[223] Derrida continues from here by asking whether the avoidance with respect to Being to

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italics] la perfection elle-même" (cf. *Enn*. VI. 9 [9] 5). Now this somewhat confused discussion can be rectified by distinguishing, in the case of Plotinus, the One's value in a *performative* sense from its non-value in a *constative* sense. Thus, the argument that we have developed in connection with Damascius' Ineffable could perhaps also be applied to Plotinus' One.

[220] See pp. 122–123.

[221] Attributes connoting value are denied at *DP* I. 14. 1–19 (denial of "superiority" (*to huperteron*) to the ultimate referent) and at *DP* I. 37. 13–38. 11 (denial of "most powerful … best" (*kratiston … ariston*) to the One).

[222] The interpretation of Combès, "La théologie aporétique de Damascius," reprinted in his *Études néoplatoniciennes* [1st ed.], pp. 199–221 may be compared with the one advocated here. According to this author, Damascius applies the mechanism of denial to *every* conceivable term—a practice that would obviously lead to the identification of the Ineffable with absolute Nothing. Combès seems to maintain that Damascius avoids this result by distinguishing between the *aporétique*—which is philosophical—and the *mystique*—which is religious (see pp. 203, 210–211, 220) so that the Ineffable retains some objectivity in the latter sphere at least (for this reason also, presumably, the title of the essay "La *théologie* …"). The present writer is roughly in agreement with this interpretation, but would add that it is the notion of *performativity* (as in the case of theurgic enactments) that is the essential component within Damascius' *mystique*.

[223] *HTAS* p. 124/*CNPP*, p. 587 (see above).

which Heidegger refers in his writings has the sense of denial that occurs in the context of negative theologies or that which occurs in the context of Freudian psychoanalysis. A study of two further passages,[224] where Heidegger's main purpose appears to be neither to avoid using the word *Being* nor to avoid mentioning the word but to avoid using it in the normal way, allows Derrida to decide in favor of the latter alternative. If we can now further specify the "common essentiality" of Avoiding and Being in Heidegger's writings that corresponds to the twofold structure of Derrida's question "How to Avoid Speaking of Being?", it should be possible to determine the extent to which Damascius' thinking parallels that of Heidegger, and approximates to Derrida's notion of negative theology *ipso facto*.

Undoubtedly, it is the performative enactment of silence (the Ineffable) with a fourfold dialectic in Damascius that corresponds most exactly to the common essentiality of Avoidance and Being in Heidegger's writings. As the ultimate referent of discourse,[225] this performative enactment of silence (the Ineffable) has been shown in Damascius to be neither principle, nor one, nor truth. Similarly as ultimate referent of discourse, the common essentiality of Avoidance and Being can be shown to be neither principle, nor one, nor truth in Heidegger. This is despite the significant difference that the "ultimate" status of the referent of discourse is determined according to

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[224] These are in "On the Question of Being" and in a seminar at the University of Zürich in 1951. In his discussion of the former passage, Derrida briefly raises with respect to Heidegger some of the issues discussed with respect to Damascius in the main part of the present chapter. In fact, there is a useful report of Heidegger's tentative approach to the idea of a circumscription of the ultimate referent in a fourfold dialectic elaborated in the present chapter. Starting from Heidegger's proposal to write the word /Being/ with an "erasure in the form of a crossing-out" (*kreuzweise Durchstreichung*), Derrida identifies first, certain negative aspects and second certain affirmative aspects of Heidegger's procedure. Negatively speaking, the icon shows that Being is not *a* being in the sense of an object that stands opposite man and can therefore be objectively represented. However, this negative aspect is complemented with a more important affirmative aspect. Affirmatively speaking, the icon *a*. allows Being to be read or deciphered, *b*. "shows" (*zeigen*) the four regions of what is here and elsewhere called the "fourfold" (*Geviert*), and *c*. gathers the four—at the crossing-point of the lines—into "the simplicity" (*die Einfalt*) of a point. Derrida further notes Heidegger's references to the "place" (*Ort*) of the crossing and to the application of a similar icon to "(the) Nothing" (*das Nichts*). However, the most important feature of Heidegger's discussion for him is the special sense of "avoidance" implied by this type of erasure: namely, a form of readability in which a word may be solely read or deciphered but not—as a speech-act of ordinary language—used normally (*HTAS*, pp. 125–126/*CNPP* pp. 588–590).

[225] The "ultimate referent of discourse" to which we have been referring throughout this chapter is here presented in its definitive form.

the structure of *metaphysics* in Damascius but according to the jointure of *history* in Heidegger's thought.[226]

The question of the relation between the ultimate referent of discourse and the notion of "principle" is addressed in many of Heidegger's writings.[227] In order to follow his arguments, one must take account of the facts that the ultimate referent of discourse is most frequently characterized as "Being" (*Sein*) in this context, and that the Greek term *archē* undergoes some semantic modification in order to reappear in the German terms *Grund* ("ground / reason") and *Satz* ("principle / proposition"). At one point, Heidegger speaks of the necessity of making a leap away from thinking of Being as *Grund* ("ground")—invariably the case in traditional metaphysics where a supreme or universal Being is the ground of beings—to thinking of Being as *Ab-Grund* ("Abyss"),[228] examples of such a movement being the transformations of the principle of identity from the form of the proposition "A = A" to the form of a "leap" itself,[229] and of the principle of reason from the form of the proposition "nothing is without reason" to the form "Being and Ground / Reason: the Same."[230]

In order to understand what Heidegger thinks of the relation between the ultimate referent of discourse and unity,[231] we need to consider the variety of guises—in addition to "Being" (*Sein*)—in which this ultimate referent can appear. When we speak of it as *Seyn* ("Be-ing"), unity is implied because we no longer think of the "difference" (*Unterschied*) between "Being" (*Sein*) and

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[226] Further differences include the fact that the ultimate referent appears in various guises in Heidegger. See below.

[227] For purposes of comparison see Damascius' discussion of "principle" summarized above.

[228] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 32–33 [GA 11]. In order to understand Heidegger's position here, it is perhaps important to note: *a*. that Be-ing is often treated as the "ground" of beings. See *CP*, § 34, p. 53 where Be-ing relates to beings as the "ground" (*Grund*) in which they come to their truth, as the "abground" (*Abgrund*) into which they sink, and as the "unground" (*Ungrund*) in which their self-evidence is assumed [GA 65, pp. 76–77]; *b*. The notion of "ground" has a function relative to Be-ing somewhat analogous to that which the notion of "principle" or "cause" has relative to beings. See *ER*, pp. 119–121 where his own account of three types of transcendental grounding is compared with Aristotle's doctrine of the "four causes" (*vier Gründe*). On the grounding aspect of *Da-sein* see note 32 above.

[229] *ID*, p. 39. This example involves a word-play on the German word *Satz* which can mean both a "principle" and a "leap."

[230] Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 52 and 75 [GA 10].

[231] For purposes of comparison see Damascius' discussion of "unity" summarized on p. 135.

"beings" (*das Seiende*),[232] although when we speak of it as *Wesen* ("Essential Sway"), duality is implied because we think both of the nominal sense of "what-ness" (*Was-Sein*) and of the verbal sense of "it holds sway" (*es west*).[233] However, that duality and unity are inseparable with respect to the ultimate referent of discourse is indicated by Heidegger's preference for the expression "Essential Sway of Being" (*das Wesen des Seyns*).[234] This point is elaborated both with respect to the ultimate referent in the form of the *Geschick* that, having the double sense of "Destiny / Sending", "proffers itself to us" (*sich uns zuschickt*) in "withdrawing its essence" (*sein Wesen entzieht*) to various degrees—thereby producing different "epochs" in the history of Being,[235]—and with respect to the ultimate referent in the form of the *Ereignis* ("Enowning") that, having the double sense of "Event / Appropriation," is that whereby relational occurrences—specifically those of Being *and* Time or Being *and* Man—are brought "into their own" (*in ihr Eigenes*) by letting them "belong together" (*zueinander gehören*).[236] The element of unity is comprised by the "sameness and simplicity" of the proffering-withdrawing[237] in the former case, and by "the belonging of expropriation to enowning as such"[238] in the latter.

The question of the relation between the ultimate referent of discourse and the notion of "truth" is also addressed in many of Heidegger's works.[239] In order to follow these discussions, one must take account of the facts that the ultimate referent of discourse is most often described as "Being" also in this context, and that Heidegger believed the original Greek notion of *alētheia* as unconcealment to have been replaced by a notion of truth as correctness of assertion from the time of Plato.[240] In one passage Heidegger argues that what is primordially true is not a proposition about a being but the being

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[232] *CP*, § 259, p. 307 and § 267, pp. 331–332. [GA 65].

[233] Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P.D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 93–95 [GA 12].

[234] Or *die Wesung des Seyns*. See *CP*, prol., § 1, p. 3, § 2, pp. 5–6, and *passim*.

[235] Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, pp. 61–62 and 90–91. Cf. *PR*, pp. 53–58, 88, and 95.

[236] Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York-London: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 19–20 and 22–23 [GA 14].

[237] *PR*, pp. 90–91 *Selbigkeit und Einfachheit*.

[238] *TB*, pp. 22–23 *zum Ereignis als solchem gehört die Enteignis*.

[239] For purposes of comparison see Damascius' discussion of "truth" on pp. 137–138.

[240] Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and the Theaetetus*, trans. T. Sadler (London-New York: Continuum, 2002) § 2, pp. 8–9, § 16, p. 87, and § 18, pp. 102–103 [GA 34]. An etymological explanation of the Greek term *alētheia* ("truth") as *a-* (privative: "un-") + *lanthanein* ("be concealed (from)") is central to this interpretation. See *ET* § 2, pp. 5–7 and § 16, pp. 85–86, etc.

to which the proposition refers, and also that a proposition is only true to the extent that it conforms to something that is unconcealed in its being,[241] thereby clearly admitting the possibility of applying the notion of truth in the sense of unconcealing, but denying the possibility of applying the notion of truth in the sense of correctness of assertion to the ultimate referent of discourse.

If Damascius and Heidegger agree in treating the ultimate referent of discourse as neither principle—in the sense of cause or proposition—, nor unity, nor truth—in the sense of true assertion—, the same can be said of their interpretation of that ultimate referent as a silence that can be performatively enacted with a fourfold dialectic.

A twofold structure, which eventually produces the fourfold structure by doubling, is especially prominent in Heidegger's essay: "The Origin of the Work of Art."[242] Here, there is described a certain "happening of Truth" (*Geschehen der Wahrheit*) that occurs in things in general and art-works in particular as a complex dynamic relation between two terms: "earth" (*Erde*) and "world" (*Welt*).[243] Since the former is defined as "a coming-forth that shelters" (*das Hervorkommend-bergende*) and the latter as "a self-disclosing openness" (*die sich őffnende Offenheit*),[244] we are obviously dealing with a dynamic relation between a concealed unconcealing in which concealment predominates and a concealed unconcealing in which unconcealing predominates. With emphasis placed on the dynamism of the relation between earth and world, Heidegger goes on to speak of an "opposition" (*Gegeneinander*) which is not a "discord" (*Zwietracht*), of that in which "each term elevates the other into the self assertion of its essential sway,"[245] of that in which "rest is an inner concentration of motion, and therefore a highest state of agitation,"[246] and of a "belonging" (*Sichgehőren*) which is also a "counter-play" (*Widerspiel*).[247] At this point, the polysemy of the term *Riss* becomes important.[248] This allows Heidegger to emphasize the dualism of the relation between earth and world since, when applied to the relation

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[241] *ET* § 16, p. 86.

[242] For the corresponding twofold structure in Damascius see pp. 127–129.

[243] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in Heidegger, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York-London: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 34–36 [GA 5: *Holzwege*].

[244] *PLT*, pp. 46 and 48.

[245] *heben ... das Eine je das Andere, in die Selbstbehauptung ihres Wesens.*

[246] *Ruhe ... die eine innige Sammlung der Bewegung, also hőchte Bewegtheit, ist.*

[247] *PLT*, pp. 48–49 and 56.

[248] And also of related compound terms such as *Aufriss* ("sketch").

between the terms, *Riss* in the sense of "rift" suggests the "intimacy" (*die Innigkeit*) of their belonging together whereas, when applied to the related terms themselves, *Riss* in the sense of "outline" sketches the rise of "the lighting / clearing of beings" (*die Lichtung des Seienden*).[249]

Various fourfold structures—which ultimately derive from the twofold structure by doubling—are prominent in Heidegger's later works.[250] For example, *Introduction to Metaphysics* traces a development in *Dasein*'s consideration of beings from a stage where it sees being as totally indeterminate to a stage where—through a consideration of four "distinctions" (*Scheidungen*) emerging during the history of metaphysics—it discovers that being has a determinate meaning.[251] The four distinctions are: being as permanence in opposition to "becoming" (*das Werden*), being as the always-identical in opposition to "appearance" (*der Schein*), being as the already-there in opposition to "thought," (*das Denken*), and being as the given in opposition to "the ought" (*das Sollen*). At this point, Heidegger argues that we must reverse these determinations in a manner best illuminated in a later text.[252] In the essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," he attaches the term "dwelling" to the processes of "preserving the Fourfold in its essential sway"[253] and of "bringing the essence of the Fourfold into things,"[254] and the term "building" to the processes of "allowing a site for the Fourfold"[255] and "producing things as locations."[256] Below the surface of Heidegger's deliberately poetical language, it is possible to see a description of certain processes of quasi-spatial articulation.[257] Here, a fourfold structure is thought as an

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[249] *PLT*, pp. 63–64.

[250] For an example of Heidegger's use of the fourfold structure that is particularly close to the *a-semantic* structure used in the present study see *CP* § 150, pp. 191–192 where "beings" (*das Seiende*) are determined according to presencing + temporal (*a1, ā2*), constancy + temporal (*ā1 ā2*), constancy + spatial (*ā1 a2*), and presencing + spatial (*a1 a2*). For the corresponding fourfold structure in Damascius see pp. 127–128, 144, 147–148.

[251] *IM*, pp. 201–202.

[252] *IM*, pp. 203–204. Heidegger here introduces the notion of "nothingness" (*das Nichts*)—an important trajectory that we will not follow at this point.

[253] Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *PLT*, p. 150 *das Geviert in sein Wesen schonen*. Heidegger often emphasizes the dynamic nature of this structure by speaking of a "Four-ing" (*Vierung*). For instance, see Heidegger, "The Thing," *PLT*, p. 180 [GA 7: *Vorträge und Aufsätze*].

[254] *PLT*, p. 151 *dessen Wesen in die Dinge bringt*.

[255] *PLT*, p. 154 *dem Geviert eine Stätte verstattet*.

[256] *PLT*, p. 158 *Dinge als Orte hervorbringt*.

[257] Heidegger defines "dwelling" at *PLT*, p. 157 as the relation between man and space, and "building" at *PLT*, p. 158 as the founding and joining of spaces.

"essential sway" (*Wesen*) and brought into an actively dynamic relation with things, and conversely a thing is thought as a "site" (*Stätte*) and is brought into a passively dynamic relation with the Fourfold. Applying this analysis to the discussion in *Introduction to Metaphysics* mentioned above, we can now better understand the further specification of the reversal later in that argument as the process in which the being encircled by the four determinations becomes the Being which encircles them, in which the four determinations are rethought in terms of the single Difference between Being and beings—elsewhere described as the "ontological difference"[258]—, and in which Being reemerges as the basic occurrence where *Dasein* relates to the four determinations.

Two aspects of the fourfold structure are particularly important to us in the present connection. First, there is the question of the relation between the four terms. Heidegger summarizes this in a passage of his essay "The Thing" where he speaks of fourfold structure as the "enowning mirror-play of the one-fold"[259] corresponding to the world, and as that in which "the world comes to essential sway."[260] Within this structure each of the four terms "belongs" (*gehören*) to the others, setting up a "mirroring" (*spiegeln*) relation in which its and the others' essences are reflected in one another. Moreover, each of the four terms "enowns" (*ereignen*) the others, setting up a "playing" (*Spiel*) relation in which it and the others are both freed from and bound to one another.[261] Second, there is the question of the nature of the four terms. Although Heidegger refers to the structure of the four terms collectively as the *Ereignis* ("Enowning"),[262] he usually avoids referring to the four terms individually with any names. This is undoubtedly because the Fourfold is essentially *non-discursive*—as suggested by the use of tautological expressions[263] and word-plays on the key-term itself[264] that defeat logical thinking[265]—and also ultimately *performative*—being characterized as a guide for thinking[266] and that from which all concepts

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[258] For a retrospective analysis of this notion see *CP* § 132, pp. 176–177.

[259] Heidegger "The Thing," in *PLT*, p. 179 *das ereignende Spiegel-Spiel der Einfalt*.

[260] *PLT*, pp. 179–180 *Welt west*.

[261] *PLT*, p. 179.

[262] See Heidegger: *Identity and Difference*, pp. 37–38 where the *Ereignis* is explicitly associated with building, dwelling, and thinking (as described above).

[263] For example, "Enowning enowns" (*das Ereignis ereignet*) at *TB*, p. 24.

[264] This includes the dual sense ("event" / "appropriation") of *Ereignis*, the hyphenation of the term (*Er-eignis*). the opposition between *Ereignis* and *Enteignis*, etc.

[265] On the non-discursive character of the *Ereignis* see also *TB*, pp. 19–22.

[266] *TB*, p. 24.

of Be-ing are said[267]—and therefore not as something that is directly thought or said.[268]

Given that the notion of a fourfold dialectic inscribing the ultimate referent of discourse in a performative structure is obviously central to Heidegger's thinking, it only remains to show that the ultimate referent can be understood both as the Ineffable (silence) and—in Derrida's language—as the common essentiality of Avoidance and Being. In this connection, the following passages from his *Contributions to Philosophy* (*Of Enowning*) are particularly instructive:

> Reticence in silence[269] is the 'logic' of philosophy, insofar as philosophy asks the grounding-question within the other beginning. Philosophy looks for *the truth of the essential swaying of be-ing*, and this truth is the hinting-resonating hiddenness (mystery) of enowning (the hesitating refusal). We can never say be-ing itself in any immediate way, precisely when it arises in the leap. For every saying comes from be-ing and speaks out of its truth.[270]

> Reticence in silence stems from the swaying origin of language itself. The basic experience … is rather the reservedness that holds unto itself over against the hesitating self-refusal in the truth (clearing of sheltering) … whenever this reservedness comes to *word*, what is said is always enowning. But to understand this saying means to enact the projecting-open and to execute knowing's leap into enowning.[271]

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[267] *CP* § 34, p. 51.

[268] This statement should perhaps be qualified. Heidegger *does* frequently identify one fourfold group of terms by individual names—namely, that consisting of god, man, earth, and world—although he seems to view these terms as reflecting the single *Ereignis* that can only be enacted. For a good summary of this see Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, trans. P. Emad and T, Kalary (London / New York: Continuum, 2006) § 9, p. 17 (GA 66) where the writer speaks of enowning as constituted by a struggle between the countering of god and man and the strife of earth and world, and of the clearing in which god overshadows the earth in its closure and man erects a world. The fourfold is primarily associated with Heidegger's thinking regarding what he terms "the ones to come" and "the last god" and with the futurity of *Da-sein*'s grounding. See the further developments in the same work at *M* § 71, pp. 209, 214–215, 218–219, 225 [GA 66] and—since the poet has a unique insight into this question—at *Elucidations of Hőlderlin's Poetry*, trans. K. Hoeller (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000), pp. 57–61, 76, 111, 175–207 [GA 4].

[269] At *CP* § 37, p. 54 Heidegger shows that his term *Erschweigung* is a translation of the Greek *sigān* (= maintaining silence). Cf. Damascius' treatment of silence discussed on p. 139 ff.

[270] *CP* § 37, pp. 54–55 *Die Erschweigung ist die "Logik" der Philosophie, sofern diese aus dem anderen Anfang die Grundfrage fragt. Sie sucht die* Wahrheit der Wesung des Seyns, *und diese Wahrheit ist die winkend-anklingende Verborgenheit* (*das Geheimnis*) *des Ereignisses* (*die zögernde Versagung*). *Wir können das Seyn selbst, gerade wenn es im Sprung ersprungen wird, nie unmittelbar sagen* [GA 65, pp. 78–79].

[271] *CP* § 38, p. 55 *Die Erschweigung entspringt aus dem wesenden Ursprung der Sprache*

Here, the ultimate referent of discourse is the essential swaying of be-ing which becomes accessible to man through the interaction of be-ing's self-refusal with respect to man and man's reservedness with respect to be-ing, this interaction taking the form of reticence in silence or the avoidance of speech.[272] If something is "said" at all in this clearing and sheltering,[273] it is only the performative enactment of the *Ereignis* itself.

It is significant that both Damascius and Heidegger treat the ultimate referent of discourse as neither principle—in the sense if cause or proposition—, nor unity, nor truth—in the sense of true assertion—but as that Ineffable (silence) which a fourfold dialectic inscribes in a performative structure, although Heidegger continues to apply the German term *Sein* ("Being") to the ultimate referent of discourse—albeit with some deviation from its normal usage[274]—whereas Damascius entirely avoids the corresponding Greek terms *on* ("Being") and *einai* ("to be") in this connection. The reasons for this disparity of approach lie in the two thinkers' totally different approaches to the notion of Being itself, a difference of approach that might perhaps be summarized *on Heidegger's terms* as follows.[275] For Heidegger, Being is different from beings, beings are thought primarily in terms of the temporal dimension of presence and are coordinated below a being which is both highest and most generic, and Being is also its own differen-

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selbst. Die Grunderfahrung ist ... sondern das Ansichhalten der Verhaltenheit gegen das zögernde Sichversagen in der Wahrheit (*Lichtung der Verbergung*) *... Wenn diese Verhaltenheit zum* Wort *kommt, ist das Gesagte immer das Ereignis. Dieses Sagen verstehen heisst aber, den Entwurf und Einsprung des Wissens in das Ereignis vollziehen* [GA 65, pp. 79–80].

[272] On the relation between avoidance—here called "not-granting" (*Verweigerung*) and "renunciation" (*Verzicht*)—and the Being's sway see also *CP* § 6, p. 17 [GA 65, p. 22].

[273] The reference to clearing and sheltering shows that we are once again dealing with the fourfold. Cf. the similar terminology in the passage quoted on pp. 158–159.

[274] For example, see Heidegger's distinction between *Sein* (which we translate as "Being") and *Seyn* (which we translate as "Be-ing"). As the writer explains at *CP* § 259, p. 307 [GA 65, p. 436], the latter spelling is introduced to show that being is now thought simultaneously inside and outside metaphysics and therefore evades the distinction of Being (*Sein*) and beings (*das Seiende*) altogether. We might paraphrase this by saying that, "Be-ing" has become historical-hermeneutic.

[275] We will not discuss here those features of Damascius' notion of Being that are developed in derivation from or in reaction to his Neoplatonic heritage. According to Damascius, *to on* is a hypostasis subsequent to the Ineffable, the One, the One-All, the All-One. It forms the first member of the triad of being-life-intellect which, according to the teaching of the *Oracula Chaldaica*, articulates the region above the level of soul. When considered in relation to its prior principles, Being is discussed under the names of "unified" (*hēnōmenon*), "One-Being" (*hen on*) and "Mixed" (*mikton*). Damascius' detailed discussion of the Unified as Being begins at *De Principiis* II. 56. 1.

tiation from beings. For Damascius, the Ineffable (silence) is different from beings, Being and the One are thought primarily in terms of the temporal dimension of presence and correspond to the highest being(s) below which other beings and unities are coordinated, and the Ineffable (silence) is also its own differentiation from beings.[276]

However, Damascius' notion of *on, einai* does have certain features in common with Heidegger's notion of *Sein*. In particular, the introduction of what one might term a "negative ontology" and an "affirmative ontology"—as opposed to the more common notion of a negative theology opposed to an affirmative theology—points towards a deconstructive critique or placing under erasure of the notion of Being understood by traditional metaphysics.[277] On the side of negative ontology, Damascius argues that there is neither a "name" (*onoma*) nor a "thought" (*noēma*) of Being because these things depend on "distinctness" (*diakrisis*) whereas Being is "indistinct" (*adiakriton*).[278] More precisely, there is neither a "generic name" (*onoma koinon*) of Being, nor a "proper name" (*onoma idion*) of Being.[279] The naming of things depends on "some property being defined and, as they say, shining forth"[280]—both with respect to sensible objects arising from earth, air, fire, and water and the higher realities constituted through being, life, and intellect[281]—and such a shining forth does not occur with Being. Moreover, if we do not have "a generic name or some compact and total thought" (*onoma … koinon ē noēma athroun ti kai holoklēron*) for the totality of sensible forms, still less do we have such a name or thought for the supreme container of all forms, i.e. Being itself.[282] On the side of affirmative ontology, Damascius argues that it is possible to apply the names "Being" (*on*) and

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[276] This last idea is implicit in the overlapping of the two construals of the fourfold structure. See p. 150.

[277] Damascius begins by speaking of the "Unified" (*hēnōmenon*) at *DP* II. 56. 1 ff., and further specifies this as "Being" (*on*) at *DP* II. 65. 3 ff. and as the "One-Being" (*hen on*) at *DP* II. 88, 1 ff.

[278] *DP* II. 59. 15–18. Cf. II. 88. 22–89. 1.

[279] *DP* II. 60. 1 and II. 66. 13.

[280] *DP* II. 63. 11–12 *tinos idiotētos aphōrismenēs kai, hōs eirētai, prolampousēs*. Rephrased in more prosaic language, the "shining-forth" of some property = the rising to prominence of that property (to the extent that some percipient notices it).

[281] *DP* II. 60. 6–61. 6. Cf. II. 63. 14–15. Damascius' argument is rendered more complex because he deals simultaneously with these two distinct examples of which one comprises the relation between a physical element and a substantial form and the other the relation between a more particular and a more universal form. See the further development below.

[282] *DP* II. 59. 22–60. 3. Literally, "the divided forms, even the last ones, taken together" (*tōn diēirēmenōn eidōn … tōn eschatōn homou pantōn*) and "the summit that is simultaneously the highest and the all-containing" (*hē akrotatē hama kai pantouchos koruphē*).

"Substance" (*ousia*) to the "the summit of all beings" (*akrotēs tōn ontōn*).[283] This naming takes the form of a "suggestion" (*endeixis*) based on one of the things "subsequent to it" (*met'auto*) and "derived from it" (*ap'autou*) albeit on a lower level of reality.[284] Hazarding a thought of it, "we divide it or rather are divided around it" (*merizomen autēn, mallon de peri autēn merizometha*) and then, beginning again, "we contract it" (*autēn sunairoumen*) in order to suggest something of the summit.[285] The theory set forth in these passages is striking because it does not apply the negative syntax to "Non-Being" and the affirmative syntax to "Being" in the usual way, i.e. in speaking about the One above (= not) Being and about Being respectively. Instead, both negative and affirmative modes of discourse are understood to reveal aspects of "Being" itself.[286]

Damascius' preoccupation with problems surrounding the interpretation of the term "Being" itself—and of some of its synonyms[287]—also gestures in the direction not only of Heidegger's earlier "fundamental ontology" but also of his later "being-historical thinking." To begin with,[288] Damascius notes that the term "Being" (*to on*) can signify *1*. "one of the kinds of Being",[289] *2*. "the full plenitude of the Kinds,"[290] *3*. "everything that subsists prior to soul,"[291] and *4*. "the summit of all the intelligible."[292] Although the distinc-

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283 *DP* II. 63. 9–12.

284 *DP* II. 63. 17–20. Cf. II. 66. 11–18.

285 *DP* II. 89. 1–6.

286 This exactly parallels Heidegger's understanding of the relation between Being and Nothingness. For a concise statement of this, see *CP* § 47, p. 70 where Heidegger explains that not-being is "a way of being" (*eine Art des Seins*) and that being is "nothing-like yet precisely being" (*nichthaft und doch gerade Seiend*). He calls this relation between Being and Nothingness "the belonging of nothingness to being" (*die Zugehörigkeit des Nichts zum* Sein) [GA 65, p. 101]. However, the context in which this idea is developed—an account of "decision" (*Entscheidung*)—is quite different from that in Damascius.

287 There are parallel (albeit subordinate) arguments about "subsistence" (*huparxis*) in the same context. Damascius points out first, that *huparxis* signifies a "principle below" (*archē* + *hupo*)—i.e. with respect to the higher principle or One (*DP* II. 76. 24–25) and second, that *huparchein* signifies the subsistence of that which has not yet proceeded (*DP* II. 77. 11–12). These two interpretations are not held to be inconsistent because *huparxis* signifies the state before procession *because of* its immediate subordination to the One. See the full discussion of substance and subsistence at *DP* III. 151. 18–154. 6—a passage from which it also emerges that "substance" (*ousia*) also has two senses depending upon whether it is aligned with the first or second sense of *huparxis*.

288 *DP* II. 56. 1–57. 11.

289 *hen ti tōn genōn tou ontos*.

290 *to holophues plērōma tōn genōn*.

291 *holon to pro psuchēs huphestōs*.

292 *to akron tou noētou pantos*.

tion between /Being/ as "word" (*onoma*) and Being as "reality" (*pragma*) is overtly maintained,[293] the intimacy of the relation between ontology and linguistics emerges from a striking sequence of arguments.[294] Here, Damascius argues that "Being" (*on*) is that which provides to each thing the facts that it "exists" (*einai*) and that it is "a being" (*on*) and that, just as "it is" (*to esti*) is the "connector" (*sundesmos*) of other verbs and nouns—the meaning apparently shifting to the verb "to be" in a linguistic sense—so is "Being" (*to on*) the connector of all the forms, being "like a root" (*hoion rhiza*) from which and in which every form is produced and established.[295] He continues by arguing that it is perhaps only [the verb] "to be" (*to einai*) that reveals the nature of both the "reality" (*pragma*) and the "concept" (*ennoia*) of something, whereas other verbs "acquire their meaning" (*onomazetai*) from properties existing or thought in association with being, these properties being indistinct from being in the higher realm but distinct from it in the lower.[296] For example, [the verb] "to be" acquires the derivative name *telethein* ("being complete") because it "runs towards completion" (*thei pros telos*), and the derivative name *pelein* ("being somewhere") because it "is near the One" (*pelaei … tou henos*).[297] Moreover, Damascius argues that [the verb] "to be" itself has acquired its meaning—as Socrates divined in the *Cratylus*—from [the verb] "to go" (*ienai*),[298] the further historical evolution of the participle "being" (*eion→eon→on*) indicating that whatever is has "the being that has the nature of activity."[299] In all these cases, the metaphysical priority of Being as reality over /Being/ as word is no doubt seriously undermined by Damascius' assumption that etymological relations reveal not the (objective) relations between the multiplicity of sensible things and the unity of the intelligible sphere but only the (subjective) relations between the multiplicity of our travails[300] and the unity of the intelligible.

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293 See *DP* II. 78. 16–17.

294 No doubt by historical accident, this style of linguistic argumentation concerning the word /Being/ finds a striking parallel in Heidegger. See *IM*, pp. 54–74 [GA 40].

295 *DP* II. 75. 10–16.

296 *DP* II. 77. 6–10.

297 *DP* II. 77. 14–24. Damascius makes similar arguments with respect to the derivative names *sōizesthai* ("being preserved") and *tungchanein* ("being successful").

298 *DP* II. 78. 1–8.

299 *einai, hoper kai energein pephuken*. Cf. *DP* II. 78. 19 "that which is said to be the 'in-act' of each thing" (*to hekastou energeiai legomenon*), and *DP* II. 79. 1–2 "that which of each thing is the 'in-act'" (*ho ekastou esti to energeiai*). At *DP* II. 78. 21–79. 1 Damascius notes that this entire interpretation of Being came to him in a dream.

300 On these travails see pp. 146–147.

We have already noted that Damascius' notion of *on, einai* has certain features in common with Heidegger's notion of *Sein* and that the introduction of what might be termed a "negative ontology" and an "affirmative ontology," in particular, points towards a deconstructive critique or placing under erasure of the notion of Being understood by traditional metaphysics.[301] This impression is much reinforced when one considers the continuation of his "negative-ontological" argument summarized earlier that, since the naming of things depends on some property "shining forth" (*prolampein*), and such a rising to prominence does not occur because of Being's indistinctness, Being is unknowable.[302] Here, the question whether Being might be considered as a "simple property" (*haploun idiōma*) is answered by saying that it is better to call it "a mediation of some kind between an element and the absolutely composite form such as the entire intellectual plenitude"[303]—in other words, "Being" is neither the rising to prominence of an individual part of the intellectual complex, nor the rising to prominence of the universal whole of that complex, but the connective relation between the two.[304]

Damascius' conclusion that "Being" is a mediation between two processes in which properties *rise to prominence* within an intellectual complex shifts the emphasis decidedly from an *ontological* to an *hermeneutic* notion of Being. Things can only "shine forth" or rise to prominence in an interpretative context of some kind.[305] Moreover, Damascius notion that there is a *mediation between two processes* in which properties rise to prominence shifts the emphasis equally decisively from a *monistic* to a *dualistic* notion of Being.[306]

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[301] See pp. 163–164.

[302] See pp. 162–163.

[303] *DP* II. 61. 9–10 *ti meson stoicheiou te kai tou sunthetou pantos eidous, hoion tou pantos noerou plērōmatos*.

[304] This exactly parallels Heidegger's understanding of the relation between Being and *Ereignis*. For a concise statement of this see *CP* § 34, p. 51 where Heidegger explains that Enowning is the "self-supplying and self-mediating midpoint" (*die sich selbst ermittelnde und vermittelnde Mitte*) into which the essential swaying of the truth of Be-ing must be thought back in advance. Such a thinking is the "en-thinking" (*Er-denken*) of Be-ing from which all "concepts of Be-ing" (*Begriffe vom Seyn*) must be said [GA 65, p. 73]. See also *CP* § 43, p. 61 on "the innermost swaying mid-point of Be-ing itself" (*die innerste Wesensmitte des Seyns selbst*) [GA 65, p. 88].

[305] The hermeneutic coloring of this argument is indicated *1.* by the further reference at *DP* II. 61. 18–19 to the fact that "the four elements subsist *as* a man or *as* a horse or *as* the moon or *as* the sun" (*ta gar tessara stoicheia anthrōpeiōs ē hippeiōs ē selēniakōs ē hēliakōs huphestēken*) when the mediation between the two processes of rising to prominence is at issue. The word "as" (*-ōs*) here denotes the mediation.

[306] Or, to be more precise, a *monistic-dualistic* view. Cf. our earlier discussion of Damas-

One final element in Damascius' account perhaps suggests an "ontological difference"—to use the terminology of Heidegger's early works—between the hermeneutic-dualistic and the ontological-monistic notions of *on / einai*.[307] A few lines on from the discussion considered immediately above,[308] Damascius notes that the "Being" [*Being A*] of which he now speaks is that established from and around the One and is not "one of the many [beings]" (*ouden esti tōn pollōn*). It is seen "by an indication that contracts all things together and posits that [*Being A*] as before all things that are distinguished from it."[309] Just as we call all things "beings," (*onta*), so we call that [*Being A*] which is before all things "a being" (*on*). "If all beings are derived from a unitary Being [*Being B*],[310] this unitary Being is derived from that [Being *A*] because the former is contracted in the latter."[311] The totality [= *Being A*] has no proper name, because every proper name is distinctive and

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cius' position on pp. 139–140 and 143–144. The notion of mediation has implications that are as much triadic as dyadic (for example, in the lengthy discussion of Being as the "Mixed"). However, the important point is that Being is no longer assumed by Damascius to be fundamentally monadic.

307 To simplify the exposition, we will call the former "Being *A*" and the latter "Being *B*."

308 At *DP* II. 64. 13–65. 2. Because of the pronominal usages producing some ambiguity in the Greek text, some clarification has been introduced into the English translation by inserting the phrases *Being A* (for the dyadic and interpretative Being) and *Being B* (for the monadic and ontological Being).

309 *DP* II. 64. 16–18 *kata endeixin … tēn homou panta sunēirēkuian kai panta auto titheisan pro pantōn ge tōn ap'autou diakrinomenōn*. Just before the present passage at *DP* II. 62. 10–63. 8 there is a complete description of this process of contraction that is almost "phenomenological" in character. Having noted that we have no name for the "total plenitude" (*to sumpan plērōma*) and that we must be content to name its "bare properties" (*idiotētai psilai*), Damascius argues that we can hardly understand the properties "shining forth" (*prolampousai*) and foreshortened from afar into the distinctness of our thoughts. The situation is compared to that in which we see mountains from a distance as indistinct and small, because of "the outflow of these appearances from a distance" (*hē hōs apo pleistou tōn phainomenōn aporrhoē*), and similar to that in which the sun, moon, and stars irradiate light. The eyes of our soul experience something of this kind with respect to the "irradiation shining forth" (*prolampousa marmarugē*) of the forms. Having noted that the "simple properties as they appear" (*haplai idiotētes … phantazomenai*) are foreshortenings and reductions of the "perfect plenitudes above" (*ta ekei … plērōmata*), Damascius goes on to argue that the simple properties are not simply "in us" (*en hēmin*) but also with greater richness in the plenitudes. Moreover, the simple properties "shine forth" (*prolampousi*) in such a manner that they "overwhelm" (*epikratousai*) all associated properties "with their own light" (*tōi oikeiōi phōti*), and also "prevail" (*enikōsai*) over a distance within which the associated properties "are extinguished" (*aposbennumenai*).

310 This unitary Being is, of course, the genus of Being (according to Plato's *Sophist*). This point was understood by Combès in his careful note (p. 245, n. 6).

311 *DP* II. 64. 20–21 *ei de ta panta onta aph'henos tou ontos, kai ekeino apo toutou, hoti kai auto en autōi sunēirētai*.

"barely grasped" (*epilambanetai molis*) from a single property. This passage is notable for its explicit distinction between the Being which is the generic cause of all beings and the Being of hermeneutic mediation—a distinction which decisively ruptures the framework of Greek onto-theology.

CHAPTER THREE

PHILOSOPHY [SPACE] LITERATURE

Proclus—Mallarmé

Although it is useful to talk about the relation between Jacques Derrida's writing and Platonism in general on the grounds that that these labels are assumed to indicate philosophical ideas of some significance, one certainly cannot advance far in such a project without distinguishing Derrida's relations to Plato from his relations to Platonism and indeed Derrida's relations to Plato from his relations to Neoplatonism. We should perhaps study Derrida's relation to Plato rather than to Platonism or Neoplatonism on the grounds that an emphasis upon the play of discourse is a shared feature of deconstruction and Plato's actual dialogues. However, Derrida's relation to Platonism or Neoplatonism rather than to Plato should be studied not only because a certain preoccupation with the question of structure is a common element in deconstruction and ancient readings of Plato, but also because the activity of deconstructing Derrida's relation to a prior text rather than simply following Derrida's own deconstruction of that text is not only possible but necessary according to his criteria.

The essay "The Double Session" first published in the periodical *Tel Quel* in 1970 and re-published in the volume *La Dissémination* in 1972[1] provides an excellent basis for the deconstructive reading of the relation between Derrida and Neoplatonism which will be attempted here. But two methodological observations are perhaps worth making at the outset. The first point concerns our choice of a philosophical vector: the notion of non-discursive truth. Here, we will trace not the philosopheme of "negative theology" which Derrida himself exploited in such texts as "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials"[2] and which has been a prominent theme in this book as a whole, but rather the philosopheme of "making the truth" which Derrida exploited in the work

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[1] Jacques Derrida, "La double séance," in Jacques Derrida, *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 199–317 = "The Double Session," in Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. B. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 173–285.

[2] Jacques Derrida, "Comment ne pas parler. Dénégations" in Jacques Derrida, *Psyché, Inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), pp. 535–595—as discussed throughout this volume.

Circumfession. Fifty-Nine Periods and Periphrases[3] and which has formed part of our subject-matter in chapter 1. The second point concerns our choice of an intertextual basis: Martin Heidegger's thinking of the distinction between truth as *adaequatio* and truth as unveiling and through that distinction the notions Being and *Ereignis*. This choice will extend and transform Derrida's own approach in "The Double Session" since the detours through Heidegger's work in Derrida's essay take place within the context of reading not Neoplatonism but Plato himself.

The first of the two segments which provide "The Double Session" with its title takes its starting-point from a strategic juxtaposition of Plato's *Philebus* and Mallarmé's *Mimique*[4] in which the second text is spatially positioned within the angle[5] formed by the first, and in which five extracts from Mallarmé's *Livre* are typographically displayed one below another.[6] Since we are here dealing with an ancient Greek philosopher and a nineteenth-century French poet, the question of the relation between philosophy and literature arises. This in its turn involves the question of the relation between philosophy and truth on the one hand and the relation between literature and truth on the other.

Displayed typographically in the manner indicated …

… the first two texts read as follows:

> SOCRATES:[7] And if he had someone with him, he would put what he said to himself into actual speech addressed to his companion, audibly uttering those same thoughts, so that what before we called opinion (*doxa*)[8] has now

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[3] Jacques Derrida, *Circumfession. Fifty-Nine Periods and* Paraphrases, in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. G. Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[4] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 173–226/*Diss*., pp. 199–255.

[5] This "angle"—together with the "hymen" and "blank" with which it is metonymically associated—is a "general structure" of deconstruction. On these ideas see pp. 179 and 183–185.

[6] This spatial-typographical presentation of texts is an important part of the non-discursive aspect of deconstruction and reaches its climax perhaps in *Glas* where passages of Hegel and Genet are laid out in parallel columns. See Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Paris: Denoël, 1981) (= Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. J.P. Leavey, and R. Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986)). The idea goes back at least to the *exergue* presented in *De la Grammatologie* where short passages of an unnamed Egyptian scribe, Rousseau, and Hegel are placed one below another. See Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967, p. 11) (= Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G.C. Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, p. 3)).

[7] The three passages quoted here can be found in Derrida, *DS*, pp. 175–176/*Diss*., pp. 201–202.

[8] The Greek terms and phrases are inserted by Derrida.

become assertion (*logos*).—PROTARCHUS: Of course.—SOCRATES: Whereas if he is alone he continues thinking the same thing by himself, going on his way maybe for a considerable time with the thought in his mind.—PROTARCHUS: Undoubtedly.—SOCRATES: Well now, I wonder whether you share my view on these matters.—PROTARCHUS: What is it?—SOCRATES: It seems to me that at such times our soul is like a book (*dokei moi tote hēmōn hē psuchē bibliōi tini proseoikenai*).—PROTARCHUS: How so?—SOCRATES: It appears to me that the conjunction of memory with sensations, together with the feelings consequent upon memory and sensation, may be said as it were to write words in our souls (*graphein hēmōn en tais psuchais tote logous*); and when this experience writes what is true, the result is that true opinion and true assertions spring up in us; while when the internal scribe that I have suggested writes what is false (*pseudē d'hotan ho toioutos par'hēmin grammateus graphēi*) we get the opposite sort of opinions and assertions.—PROTARCHUS: That certainly seems to me right, and I approve of the way you put it.—SOCRATES: Then please give your approval to the presence of a second artist (*dēmiourgos*) in our souls at such a time.—PROTARCHUS: Who is that?—SOCRATES: A painter (*zōgraphos*) who comes after the writer and paints in the soul pictures of these assertions that we make.—PROTARCHUS: How do we make out that he in his turn acts, and when?—SOCRATES: When we have got those opinions and assertions clear of the act of sight (*opsis*), or other sense, and as it were see in ourselves pictures or images (*eikones*) of what we previously opined or asserted. That does happen with us, doesn't it?—PROTARCHUS: Indeed it does.—SOCRATES: Then are the pictures of true opinions and assertions true, and the pictures of false ones false?—PROTARCHUS: Unquestionably.—SOCRATES: Well, if we are right so far, here is one more point in this connexion for us to consider.—PROTARCHUS: What is that?—SOCRATES. Does all this necessarily befall us in respect of the present (*ta onta*) and the past (*ta gegonota*), but not in respect of the future (*ta mellonta*)?—PROTARCHUS: On the contrary, it applies equally to them all.—SOCRATES: We said previously, did we not, that pleasures and pains felt in the soul alone might precede those that come through the body? That must mean that we have anticipatory pleasures and anticipatory pains in regard to the future.—PROTARCHUS: Very true.—SOCRATES: Now do these writings and paintings (*grammata te kai zōgraphēmata*), which a while ago we assumed to occur within ourselves, apply to past and present only, and not to the future?—PROTARCHUS: Indeed they do.—SOCRATES: When you say "indeed they do," do you mean that the last sort are all expectations concerned with what is to come, and that we are full of expectations all our life long?—PROTARCHUS: Undoubtedly.—SOCRATES: Well now, as a supplement to all we have said,[9] here is a further question for you to consider.[10]

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[9] The phrase "as a supplement to all we have said" (*comme supplément à tout ce que nous venons de dire*) is a kind of (unacknowledged) gloss added by Derrida himself.

[10] Plato, *Philebus* 38e–39e. The English translation is taken by B. Johnson from R.

MIMIQUE

> Silence, sole luxury after rhymes, an orchestra only marking with its gold, its brushes with thought and dusk, the detail of its signification on a par with a stilled ode and which it is up to the poet, roused by a dare, to translate! the silence of an afternoon of music; I find it, with contentment, also, before the ever original reappearance of Pierrot or of the poignant and elegant mime Paul Margueritte.
>
> Such is this PIERROT MURDERER OF HIS WIFE composed and set down by himself, a mute soliloquy that the phantom, white as a yet unwritten page, holds in both face and gesture at full length to his soul. A whirlwind of naive or new reasons emanates, which it would be pleasing to seize upon with security: the aesthetics of the genre situated closer to principles than any! (no)thing in this reign of caprice foiling the direct simplifying instinct … This—"The scene illustrates but the idea, not any actual action, in a hymen (out of which flows Dream), tainted with vice yet sacred, between desire and fulfillment, perpetration and remembrance: here anticipating, there recalling, in the future, in the past, *under the false appearance of a present*. That is how the Mime operates, whose act is confined to a perpetual allusion without breaking the ice or the mirror: he thus sets up a medium, a pure medium, of fiction." Less than a thousand lines, the role, the one that reads, will instantly comprehend the rules as if placed before the stageboards, their humble depository. Surprise, accompanying the artifice of a notation of sentiments by unproffered sentences—that, in the sole case, perhaps, with authenticity, between the sheets and the eye there reigns a silence still, the condition and delight of reading.[11]

Displayed typographically in the manner indicated …

… the third text reads as follows

> "exit in the
> midst of the session
> I feign to carry off
> the 160—the play
> —I bring it back—
> and return it
> to the cubbyholes
> the other way around
>
> ⌈where it seems
> —such is the double session [192(A)]

Hackforth, *Plato's Examination of Pleasure. A Translation of the Philebus with Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

[11] Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres Complètes*, eds. H. Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 310 according to Derrida's citation. The English translation used here is by B. Johnson.

only when it has become
a book again" [182]

"... which
thus gives two sessions" [91(A)][12]

The relation (A) between *literature* and truth is addressed most fully towards the end of the first segment of "The Double Session" where the text of *Mimique* is treated as a kind of handbook of literary theory.[13] According to Derrida, this handbook shows that a literary work has no essence or truth in the sense of attributing some determinateness to external objects through the "is" contained in the question: "what is *x*?" Moreover, such a work ultimately refers only to its own process of referring in a situation of infinite regress. Therefore, the literary work has no essence or truth in the sense of attributing a determinateness to an external object through the "is" in the question "what is literature?" itself. But since it is still worth investigating what has traditionally been represented under the name "literature" and why, Derrida continues with the argument. Here, he points out the impossibility of determining whether the mime depicted in the text, the poet Mallarmé writing the text, or the reader of Mallarmé's text depicting the mime is the starting-point of the narrative process, this ambiguous situation being sustained primarily through the complications introduced into the syntax by the poet. He also notes the impossibility of determining to what extent Mallarmé, who only incorporated these syntactic devices in the third written version of *Mimique*, was conscious of the implications of his literary method. The reply to all such questions, Derrida concludes by invoking a typically Mallarméan image, will merely be "the burst of laughter that echoes deep inside the antre (cave)."

The relation (B) between *philosophy* and truth is discussed in two arguments within the same segment where the philosophical implications of Mallarmé's *Mimique* are unfolded. In both cases, we are presented with a kind of transitional movement between philosophy and literature in which an alignment of the positions of Plato and Mallarmé with respect to the mimetic or imitative is replaced by a movement towards a contrast of their respective positions. In these arguments, the movement towards contrast of Plato and Mallarmé is heightened by an intertextual reading of Heidegger for whom truth is not only the *adaequatio* between the representation

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[12] *Le "Livre" de Mallarmé. Premières recherches sur les documents inédits*, ed. Jacques Scherer (Paris: Gallimard, 1957). The English translation is here again by B. Johnson. Since the time of Derrida's writing, a new edition of Scherer's volume (Paris: Gallimard, 1977) has appeared.

[13] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 222–226/*Diss.*, pp. 251–255.

and the present of the thing itself but also the unveiling of the present as *alētheia*.[14] It is the first sense of truth that is operative within the alignment of Plato's and Mallarmé's positions with respect to the mimetic or imitative and the second within the movement towards a contrast of their respective positions.

In the earlier of the two main arguments about philosophy and truth,[15] Derrida is in actual fact explaining certain features of deconstruction—not mentioned by name—through a reading of a complete Mallarméan text. The argument is based on Mallarmé's ambivalent description of a certain mimetic performance or of a narrative of that mimetic performance. According to Derrida, the mimetic operation can only be described with extensive negative qualification by saying that it is an imitation which imitates nothing, a doubling of what was never simple, a reference which refers to nothing, and a mirror with no object that is reflected. Mallarmé's account of mimesis is similar to Plato's notion of imitation in preserving the differential and doubling structure, together with the notion of a copy of a copy, yet different from Plato's concept of imitation in setting aside the dialectical and metaphysical assumptions, together with the notion of a model which is not a copy. Thus, Mallarmé can be understood not as totally abandoning Plato's theory of imitation—for such a total rejection would inevitably constitute a lapsing back into the dialectical and metaphysical context of the latter—but as displacing it in a subtle manner.

The earlier of the two main arguments about philosophy and truth is preceded by commentary on the passage of Plato's *Philebus* that was chosen as one of the conceptual bases of Derrida's "Double Session."[16] This passage is the famous comparison of the human soul with a book in which a scribe writes true or false words and then a painter adds true or false pictures to those words. Derrida begins by noting that, although the actual word "imitation" does not occur in the text, the process of imitation is nevertheless illustrated by the text, and then presents a quasi-logical summary of the content of the passage. Among the items distinguished are four "facets": 1. The book is a dialogue or dialectic, 2. The truth of the book is decidable, 3. The value of the book (true/false) is not intrinsic to it, and 4. The element of this book is the image in general; and also two propositions: 1. Imitation produces a thing's double, and 2. Whether like or unlike, the imitator is

[14] See chapter 2.1, note 26 and pp. 37–42.
[15] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 205–208/*Diss.*, pp. 233–237.
[16] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 184–194/*Diss.*, pp. 209–220.

something. It is obvious that Derrida is attempting to display the structural and discursive assumptions of Plato's thought in the highly compressed and deductive presentation of this section of his text, and that we are intended to understand in a similar manner certain important motifs of Plato's philosophy which have already been utilized in the introductory portion of this segment of his essay: namely, Idea, Sun, and Cave.

The earlier of the two main arguments about philosophy and truth is also preceded by a commentary on the text of Mallarmé's *Mimique* which was chosen as another of the conceptual bases of Derrida's "Double Session."[17] This text describes the mimetic performance entitled "Pierrot Murderer of his Wife" and an earlier booklet written by the mime himself. Derrida suggests that its author is primarily concerned with deflecting the usual sense of "imitation" into certain modalities which include a blurring of the distinction between verbal signification and bodily signification, an endless self-reference whereby the process of imitation is itself imitated, and a blurring of the distinction between dependence on a prior text and independence of any prior text. It seems likely that in the more extended and associative presentation which begins in this section of his text, Derrida is endeavoring to display the anti-structural and non-discursive implications of Mallarmé's writing, and that we are intended to understand along these lines not only the central motif of Hymen which is peculiar to Mallarmé but also the motifs of Idea, Luster/Sun, and Cave which occur in both Plato and Mallarmé.

In the later of the two main arguments about philosophy and truth, Derrida is in actual fact providing a complete account of deconstruction—again not mentioned by name—through the reading of a single Mallarméan term.[18] The argument is based on Mallarmé's statement that the ambiguous performance or narrative "illustrates but the idea, not any actual action, in a hymen (out of which flows Dream), tainted with vice yet sacred, between desire and fulfillment, perpetration and remembrance: here anticipating, there recalling, in the future, in the past, *under the false appearance of a present*."[19] Among the most noteworthy features of Derrida's use of the notion of "hymen" at this point are: *a*. that it henceforth replaces the notion of imitation, and *b*. that it is handled in both a semantic and a logico-syntactic manner.[20]

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[17] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 194–205/*Diss*., pp. 220–233.

[18] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 219–222/*Diss*, pp. 248–252.

[19] *sous une apparence fausse de présent* (italicized in Derrida's original text).

[20] Derrida also treats the hymen in a prosodic manner—as rhythmic cadence in verse—in the second part of "The Double Session." See *DS*, pp. 258–259/*Diss*., pp. 291 and our pp. 191–192.

The *semantic* treatment (*i*) of hymen, which dominates a further commentary on the text of *Mimique* preceding the later argument about philosophy and truth, intensifies the tendency towards non-discursivity.[21] Here. Derrida argues that hymen constitutes a kind of textual reading through the manipulation of oppositions such as model and image, temporal prior and posterior, spatial interior and exterior, signified and signifier in which there is neither a maintenance of the opposition of terms nor the suppression of one pole of the opposition, and further that this hymen represents a kind of general principle of structure which is substitutable for but not identical with such other general structural principles as "between," "cave," "dream," "veil," and "fold." Throughout this section, that parallelism between description and enactment which is elsewhere called performative is much in evidence. Thus, Derrida also engages in the hymen-like practice of weaving together a series of twenty-two independent items ranging in size between a single word, through etymologies, dictionary-definitions, and statements, to complete arguments.

The *logico-syntactic* treatment (*ii*) of hymen, which dominates the later argument about philosophy and truth following the commentary on the text of *Mimique*, further intensifies the tendency towards non-discursivity.[22] After repeating the thesis that hymen is a general structure of textual reading, Derrida points out that hymen constitutes on the one hand not the semantic richness of a word or concept but the syntactical praxis which composes and decomposes it, and on the other hand not a proposition which can be true or false in terms of formal logic or even mediated or sublated in terms of Hegelian logic. In fact, it represents the spacing between the semantic, syntactic, and logical. As Derrida concludes, the hymen is an undecidable in a sense analogous to Gödel's proposition which, given a system of axioms governing a multiplicity, is neither a deductive consequence of nor in contradiction with those propositions. It is also a kind of process involving a re-marking of the semantic void, in which the semantic void signifies, and the signified is the spacing between the semantic and the syntactic themselves.

In establishing our methodological criteria for reading Derrida's "The Double Session" at the beginning of this chapter, we noted our intention of selecting as philosophical vector the notion of non-discursive truth and as

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[21] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 209–218/*Diss*., pp. 237–247.

[22] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 222–226/*Diss*., pp. 251–255. This is the section of text which has already yielded the working definition of "literature" discussed earlier. See p. 173.

intertextual basis Heidegger's thinking of truth as *adaequatio* and as unveiling. Something should now be said on the second point. In particular, we should follow Derrida's lead when he argues *a.* that the alignment of the positions of Plato and Mallarmé with respect to the imitative or mimetic can be understood in terms of Heidegger's first sense of truth as the *adaequatio* between the representation and the present of the thing itself, and *b.* that the movement towards a contrast of the positions of Plato and Mallarmé can be understood in terms of Heidegger's second sense of truth as the unveiling of the present as *alētheia*.[23] Now, Derrida's position on this question is actually more subtle than this statement might suggest since on the one hand, he seems to align himself with Heidegger when he further explains that Mallarmé's notion of hymen is "at the edge of being" as that which both undoes or evades all ontologies and also underwrites them and contains them[24] but on the other hand, he seems to distance himself from Heidegger when he argues that the Mallarméan mime's action is outside the system of truth in being neither the conforming of a representation to a presence nor the unveiling of any presence.[25] Although we may forego an investigation of the precise relations between Heidegger and Derrida at this point,[26] the general

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[23] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 183–184/*Diss.*, p. 209. Cf. *DS*, pp. 205–206/*Diss.*, pp. 233–234. Derrida returns to this question in the second part of "The Double Session" where Heidegger's notion of truth as *alētheia* is linked with the "non-thematicism" of Mallarmé. See *DS*, pp. 262–268/*Diss.*, pp. 294–300.

[24] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 215–216/*Diss.*, pp. 244–245. Clearly, Derrida is here arguing in his usual manner that an effective deconstruction of the "logocentric" implications of a prior text will correspond to Heidegger's destruction of the history of Being (i.e. beings) determined according to the predominance of the present over the other dimensions of time, yet will evade Heidegger's regrettable tendency to lapse back into a variety of quasi-systematic and quasi-holistic formulations. On this approach to Heidegger by Derrida see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, p. 33 ff.

[25] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 207–208/*Diss.*, pp. 235–236.

[26] It should at least be noted that Derrida's use of Heidegger in relation to Plato at this point is a little simplistic. If we are willing to refer to *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*—perhaps Heidegger's finest study of the questions relevant here—, we find that the first sense of truth as *adaequatio* between the representation and the present of the thing itself and his second sense of truth as the unveiling of the present as *a-lētheia* can both be found in Plato's text. It is therefore not necessary to oppose Plato and Mallarmé too rigidly on the question of truth. In fact, when Heidegger in his very creative reading of the *Republic* interprets the basic function of the Ideas arranged in dependence on the Good as a "letting-through for seeing … letting through of beings" and the freedom achieved by one of the cave dwellers as a "projective binding of oneself … a pre-modelling of being," he is clearly suggesting through Plato's Ideas the kind of non-discursive and performative duality that Derrida indicates through the Mallarméan hymen. See Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen*

assumption of an intertextual relation between Heidegger and Derrida is so important for understanding not only the explicit arguments in "The Double Session" but also the relation between those arguments and certain Neoplatonic views that we must return to it briefly later on.

The position we have now reached in understanding the relation between philosophy, literature, and truth according to "The Double Session" might be summarized as follows. Literature does not embody propositional truth in the sense that its essence is realized in any true propositions of the form "S is P" about something else or that any proposition in the form "S is P" can capture the essence of literature. One may contrast philosophy and literature by saying that the truth sought by the former resides in the agreement between a thought and an object which necessarily involves propositions, whereas the truth sought by the latter resides in the disclosing of something concealed which does not necessarily involve propositions. It is the transition between philosophy and literature as so defined, especially as demonstrated in a combined reading of Plato's and Mallarmé's accounts of "imitation," which constitutes a minimal definition of what Derrida sometimes calls "deconstruction." Specifically, this reading involves on the one hand a passage from Plato's *Philebus*—where the word "imitation" does not occur—in which the propositional and representing nature of philosophical truth is shown, and on the other the text of Mallarmé's *Mimique*—where the word "imitation" does occur—in which the transition from the propositional and representing nature of philosophical truth to the non-propositional and disclosing nature of literary truth is illustrated. But how is this deconstructive transition to be conceived? Derrida here substitutes the notion of "hymen" which is peculiar to Mallarmé for the notion of imitation which occurs in both Plato and Mallarmé, and the context shows that this hymen is neither a thing, nor a concept, nor a term but what is elsewhere called a "general structure."[27] There now follows a discussion of the general structure of hymen from a kind of semantic viewpoint in which its function in the manipulation of textual oppositions and its possibility of substitution for other general structures is emphasized. The performative aspects of the term are given a special prominence here.[28] Last comes a discussion of

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der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet (GA 34) (= *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Parable of the Cave and the Theaetetus*, trans. T. Sadler (New York: Continuum, 2005)), pp. 42–44.

[27] For the notion of "general structure" see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, p. 64 ff.

[28] For the sense of "performativity" see Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 188–194 and p. 152 of the present volume.

the general structure of hymen from a sort of logico-syntactic viewpoint in which its function as the "spacing" not only within the spheres of the logical, semantic, and syntactic, but even between the spheres of the logical, semantic, and syntactic is revealed. Derrida calls this a "re-marking of the void."[29]

Our discussion of Derrida's "The Double Session" began by drawing attention to the juxtaposition of passages from Plato's *Philebus* and Mallarmé's *Mimique*. This juxtaposition indicated a relation between physical and semantic space and a mediating function (separating and joining) of space itself, the relation and mediation being simultaneously described and embodied in order to reveal the method of deconstruction with special reference to its performative aspect. In the light of Derrida's subsequent commentary on the juxtaposed texts, it has been possible to observe an

[29] It would be of great interest, although tangential to the present concerns, to pursue Derrida's discussion in the second part of "The Double Session." Here, he undertakes a sustained analysis of Mallarmé's poetics—in counterpoint with Jean-Pierre Richard, *L'univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* (Paris: Seuil, 1961)—where he progressively moves the poet away from traditional metaphysics and rhetoric in the direction of deconstruction. The main stages in Derrida's argument might be summarized as follows: *A*. Statement of parallel between the Mallarméan "fold" and the structure of "The Double Session" as a whole (*DS*, pp. 227–230/*Diss*., pp. 257–260); *B*. Introduction to the interpretation of Richard, placing emphasis on its tendency towards ontology. Richard assumes the traditional opposition between the real and the imaginary, whereas Mallarmé in fact displaces this relation (*DS*, pp. 231–236/*Diss*. pp. 261–266); *C*. Discussion of Mallarmé's poetics in contrast to Richard's interpretation. *1*. The nature of literature according to Mallarmé. Using the "Crise de vers" and "Crayonné au théâtre" as primary evidence, Derrida argues that literature is concerned with "spacing" within—and more importantly, between—the extra-mental and mental worlds, as shown by Mallarmé's references to the hieroglyph and the pirouette (*DS*, pp. 236–242/*Diss*., pp. 266–273); *2*. Mallarmé's theory of the genres of literature. Here, Derrida considers the extent to which the genres exhibit sameness with respect to one another—in the process of setting aside (e.g. of extra-mental reference by *différance*)—and otherness—in having different trace-elements (e.g. historical in drama and emblematic in ballet). In conclusion, the relation between the genres has the nature of a "hymen" rather than the fusion envisaged by Wagner (*DS*, pp. 242–244/*Diss*., pp. 273–275); *3*. The nature of literary criticism. Derrida challenges the preoccupation with "thematic" criticism on the grounds that this privileges traditional ontology and the latter's oppositional structure, instead advocating a disseminative (i.e. deconstructive) approach based on "hymen," "writing," and other quasi-general structures. He exemplifies the latter with a non-thematic discussion of such Mallarméan ideas as the "blank" and the "fold" (*DS*, pp. 244–276/*Diss*., pp. 275–308); *4*. The nature of literature according to Mallarmé Returning to the "Crise de vers" as textual basis, Derrida argues that the handling of both rhyme and rhythm indicates Mallarmé's abandonment of traditional ontology and thematicism in favor of the hymen between the arbitrary and necessary aspects of language (*DS*, pp. 277–285/*Diss*., pp. 309–317). Derrida sees this final point as the real key to the interpretation of *Un coup de dés* (*DS*, p. 285/*Diss*., p. 317).

emphasis initially placed on the terms separated and joined by the space—Plato and Mallarmé, philosophy and literature, philosophical truth and literary truth—but then shifted to the space itself that separated and joined—the *Hymen*. It is also apparent that, since Mallarmé rather than Plato was the source of these spatial notions, in exploring or enacting the relation between Plato and Mallarmé, predominance was assigned to the second term: namely, Mallarmé. This in its turn produced a situation in which the force of Plato's notion of *imitation*—implying a unilateral and discontinuous relation between terms—was *relaxed*.

At this point in our narrative, certain tendencies will be reversed. We will unfold the further implications of "The Double Session" by juxtaposing passages from Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* and Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*. This juxtaposition will again indicate a relation between physical and semantic space and a mediating function (separating and joining) of space itself, the relation again being simultaneously described and embodied in order to reveal the method of deconstruction with special reference to its performative aspects. In the light of our anticipatory commentary on the juxtaposed texts, it will be possible to observe an initial emphasis placed on the terms separated and joined by the space—Proclus and Mallarmé, philosophy and literature, philosophical geometry and literary geometry—but then shifted to the space itself that separates and joins—the *Blank*. It is also apparent that, since Mallarmé rather than Proclus will be the source of these spatial notions, in exploring or enacting the relations between Proclus and Mallarmé, predominance will be assigned to the second term: namely, Mallarmé. This in its turn will produce a situation in which Proclus' notion of *emanation*—implying a bilateral and continuous relation between the terms—will be *intensified*.

There is abundant evidence for Proclus' interest in the nature of geometrical space in the two prologues and the commentary on the definitions in his *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*. Here, the commentator addresses questions regarding the method of the Euclidean treatise by noting that in its balancing of affirmative and negative statements and its formal organization into propositions, the procedure of geometrical discussion parallels the procedure of theological exposition. Proclus also addresses questions regarding the content of Euclid's treatise by exploring the precise metaphysical relations between on the one hand, such simple geometrical entities as limit, point, line, surface, and angle—together with more complex ones such as circular, rectilinear, and mixed figures—and on the other hand, such higher realities as natures, souls, intellects, and gods. This ontological discussion is complemented by an epistemological analysis. Here, the commentator con-

siders the dependence of geometry on a specific level of perception and the exploitation by geometry of processes of imitation and symbolism.

It is probably legitimate to identify exploration of the relation between geometry and *philosophy* as Proclus' primary concern in the *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*. The nature of this relation can be clarified from one viewpoint by studying the further relation between discursive and non-discursive thought. Proclus aims to show that the propositional method practised by Euclid can be translated into the philosophical context by identifying it with the discursive and temporal thinking characteristic of the human soul that is subordinate to the non-discursive and non-temporal thinking typical of the divine intellect.[30] From another viewpoint, the nature of the relation between geometry and philosophy is illuminated by considering the further relation between practical and theoretical activity. Proclus' intention is to show that Euclid's propositional method can be accommodated to philosophical thinking by identifying its systematic recourse to both theorems and problems with the human soul's combination of contemplative reflection and ritual practices. It is perhaps within this argument, where the theurgic use of geometry seems to imply not only the *adaequatio* between the representation and the thing present but also the unveiling of the present as *alētheia*, that the philosophical question regarding the nature of truth emerges most clearly.[31]

Mallarmé's figural poem *Un Coup de dés* and his sketches for *Le Livre* also reflect an interest in the question of geometrical space, although here imaginary space takes an even more definite priority over real space than it did in the case in Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*, and a notion of linguistic space enters additionally into the discussion. We shall confine ourselves to making a few remarks about the relation between geometry and *literature* in these two Mallarméan works.

In the preface attached to the poem *Un Coup de dés* when the latter first appeared in the journal *Cosmopolis* in 1897, Mallarmé introduces questions concerning geometry by implicitly distinguishing three kinds of space: a physical space indicated by the blanks surrounding the words, a signifying space typified by the mental separation between one group of words and another, and an ideal space indicated by the succession of images in the

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[30] and also the human intellect to the extent that it is assisted by theurgy. See chapter 2.1, pp. 50 ff.

[31] See above p. 173 ff.

order of the text. In the poem itself, the writer is concerned on the one hand, with the practical manipulation of space. For example, physical space is combined with text in order to extend the signifying space of the latter, the combination of space and text taking the form of an encoding of space alone, space and text, or text alone with various signifieds—for example, chance and paradox, constellation and ocean, and life and art—, while the extensions of signifying space take a form that is either predominantly semantic or predominantly syntactic. The writer is also concerned with the theoretical description of space in his poem. His references to the "throw of dice" and to "place" introduce the relation between chance and place in the sense of the possibility of creation with respect to the infinite range of semantic properties, and his statements that the dice-throw "will never abolish chance" and that "nothing will have taken place but the place" the relation between paradox and place in the sense of the negation of the same possibility of creation.

In *Un Coup de dés*, the broader question of the relation between geometry and literature is explored primarily in connection with the relation between the practical manipulation and theoretical discussion of space and also, in the latter case, in connection with the tension between the arbitrary and necessary aspects of language implied by the discussion of chance and space. In *Le Livre*, the wider issue of the relation between the geometrical and the literary is again treated mainly in association with the relation between the practical manipulation and theoretical discussion of space and also, in the latter case, in association with the tension between the non-discursive and discursive aspects of language implied by the discussion of literary proof. Mallarmé's references to the arbitrary and non-discursive aspects of language provide the context in which the possibility of a poetic truth independent of the *adaequatio* between representation and the thing present is raised.[32]

The notebook left among Mallarmé's posthumous papers and entitled *Le Livre* by its first editor raises questions concerning geometry not only in the language of the textual fragments but in the spatial organization of those fragments. In particular, Mallarmé illustrates the non-syntactic form of his poetic language in the spatial arrangement of isolated words on the page in accordance with the semantic connotations that they possess, and asserts the non-propositional form of this language in his references to

[32] See above p. 173 ff.

proof through the self-identification, doubling, and inverse repetition of the spatially configured verbal materials. In addition, he demonstrates the semantic intensification of this non-syntactic and non-propositional material through the selection and permutation of unbound pages in an imagined *quasi*-theatrical performance of the work, the positioning of lines on each page being compared to the first two dimensions and the superimposition of lines on successive pages to the third dimension of Euclidean space. Finally, Mallarmé reveals the general pervasiveness of geometrical thinking in *Le Livre* through his explanation of the connections between different textual materials possible in a given performance by means of tables, graphic symbols, and diagrams.

A particularly important role in Mallarmé's exploration of geometry is played by the "blank" or "white" (*blanc*). To recapitulate and expand the most relevant points made earlier, the blank—in the sense of the white background of the printed page—represents a physical space which may be considered as signifying a semantic space or a syntactic space.[33] As physical space, it can be considered in relation to itself—as infinite graphic possibility—or in relation to the letters and words that demarcate it. As semantic space or syntactic space, it can be understood in relation to itself—as infinite semantic or syntactic possibility—or in relation to the semes or syntagms that define it. In the literary practice of *Un Coup de dés*, the blank considered in separation from type is correlated with such signifieds as "chance" and "paradox," and the type considered in separation from the blank with such signifieds as "square" and "constellation." The blank considered together with type operates in a different manner. As used in *Un Coup de dés* and *Le Livre*, this not only signifies the possibility of syntactic and semantic combination but also activates the possibility of syntactic and semantic combination. Thus, blank considered together with type has a performative role.

One can establish a close relation between Mallarmé's blank and both the general structures of deconstruction and the structural principles of Neoplatonism. The relation to deconstruction is already apparent in Derrida's commentary on *Mimique*. Here the "hymen" was characterized as a kind of textual reading through the manipulation of oppositions in which there is neither the maintenance of the opposition of terms nor the suppression of one pole of the opposition. The hymen was further characterized as neither the semantic richness of a word or concept nor a proposition that can be

[33] See pp. 179–180.

true or false, but as the spacing between the semantic, the syntactic, and the logical realms themselves.[34]

These comments show that the *blank as hymen* is one of the "general structures" typical of Deconstruction.[35] Let us recall our description made elsewhere of a certain method of explaining or modifying contradictories by associating them with general or quasi-general structures that are understood and enacted,[36] the first part of this description referring to the process whereby a positive term discovered is first displaced by a negative term which is then displaced by a combined term (which may itself be displaced by a neutral term or another combined term), and the second part of the description referring to various terms signifying the conditions of possibility or impossibility of possessing structure, it sometimes being more practicable to furnish examples of such terms rather than to define their character precisely. The most important aspect of what was described is that it applies, given certain modifications of detail to both deconstruction and Neoplatonism. In deconstruction, there is explanation and modification of contradictories which are themselves dualities of opposites where one term is accorded primacy of value over another: for example, eternity over time or male over female, whereas in Neoplatonism—where the first three stages of the process are called remaining, procession, and reversion—, there is explanation of contradictories each of which is unitary: for example, substance or activity. In deconstruction, the contradictories are associated with quasi-general structures which are understood *and enacted*: for example, "Trace," "Difference," or "Supplement," whereas in Neoplatonism—where a hierarchy of principles or hypostases is assumed—the contradictories are

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[34] See pp. 175–176.

[35] Derrida discusses Mallarmé's notion of the *blanc* at some length in the second part of "The Double Session" (see *DS*, pp. 252–258/*Diss.*, pp. 283–290). Initiating this discussion with a series of eight propositions, Derrida proposes an interpretation of the *blanc* in which a distinction is admitted between *a*. all the semes involving "whiteness" (snow, milk, etc.) and *b*. the site of writing between *i*. all the "white" semes, and *ii*. all semes *tout court*, although this distinction is then said to be "folded" (i.e. destabilized by *différance*) (*DS*, pp. 252–254 and 257–258/*Diss.*, pp. 283–286 and pp. 289–290). In addition, Derrida makes a critique of J.-P. Richard's taxonomic (i.e. semantically rigid) theory of the blank. According to Richard, one must maintain a distinction between "whites" as abstract concepts and "whites" as material things, and also maintain the hierarchy implicit in the metaphorical relations between these sets (*DS*, pp. 254–258/*Diss.*, pp. 285–290). Derrida's interpretation of the Mallarméan blank illustrates his idea elaborated elsewhere that everything is metaphor and nothing is metaphor (*DS*, p. 258/*Diss.*, p. 290).

[36] See Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 64–68.

associated with general structures which are understood *only*: for example, "Intellect" or "Soul." Now since Derrida treats the hymen explicitly—and the blank implicitly—as a quasi-general structure in association with which contradictories may be explained or modified throughout the "Double Session," the most important contradictory terms being the opposition of model and copy on which the discussion of imitation is based, one could argue that Derrida is unfolding the implications of a Neoplatonic structure in the process of deconstructing Plato's *Philebus* by reading it through Mallarmé's *Mimique*.

The relation between Mallarmé's blank and the structural principles of Neoplatonism will be explored further in the second part of the present chapter. We will here simply anticipate one of our future findings by drawing attention to the discussion in Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements* where the duality of "limit" (*peras*) and "infinity" (*apeiria*)—for example, in the geometrical relation between surface and solid or the metaphysical relation between the One and Intellect—corresponds to Mallarmé's duality of type and blank. Although Proclus nowhere refers explicitly to the blank of a written text, the notion of infinity that sustains the emanative system performs most of the latter's functions.[37]

One can also establish a particularly close relation between Mallarmé's blank and Heidegger's *Riss*.[38] This concept is elaborated most notably in Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art" where it enters into the discussion of the "happening of Truth" (*Geschehnis der Wahrheit*) exemplified by Van Gogh's painting of the peasant woman's shoes and the Greek temple set in the landscape.[39] The happening of Truth in art-works represents

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[37] As we have argued in chapter 2.4, Damascius' notion of the Ineffable—particularly as employed in relation to emanation—can be seen as approaching this notion of a textual blank. See pp. 154 ff.

[38] It is also possible to establish further relations with Heidegger's "Be-ing" (*Seyn*) and "Enowning" (*Ereignis*). On these notions see pp. 157–161.

[39] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 41 ff. [GA 5: *Holzwege*]. Heidegger's notion of *Riss* has been exploited in various discussions of visual art in Jacques Derrida: *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. McLoed (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987) = Jacques Derrida: *La Vérité en Peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978). In connection with the same argument of "The Origin of the Work of Art" that we are currently considering. Derrida notes that the two most important connotations of *Riss*: opening above the gulf and holding together the latter's edges, are both suggested by Cezanne's *trait* (in "Passe-Partout" [= *TP*, pp. 1–13], pp. 5–6). He further comments on the overlapping between two families

a specific case of the unveiling of the present as *alētheia* which constituted Heidegger's second sense of truth and was utilized by Derrida in reading the *Philebus* and *Mimique*,[40] the specificity residing in the facts that as *this* happening it occurs in *this* work for the first time and that the work in which the happening occurs *is* at all rather than *is not*.[41] The happening itself occurs as a dynamic relation between two terms: "earth" (*Erde*)—defined as that which comes forth and holds itself back—and "world"—defined as the self-opening openness of a people's historical decisions—both of which are relations between unconcealing and concealing.[42] The function of the *Riss* in this connection is connected with the double meaning of the German word as "rift" and as "design," the unity-duality of the word reflecting the unity-duality of its referent. According to Heidegger, the bringing forth of beings through the relation between earth and world occurs in such a way that a rift opens up within the beings at the same time as those beings themselves are brought into the design. The rift aspect of the relation between earth and world is further characterized as the "intimacy" (*Innigkeit*) of their belonging together rather than a "cleft" (*Kluft*) between them, and the design aspect as a "sketch" (*Auf-riss*) of the basic features of the lighting / clearing of beings.[43] Now the double meaning of the German word *Riss* does not exactly reflect a similar double meaning of the Mallerméan blank. However, it can certainly be argued that the blank of *Un coup de dés* has a broadly similar function to that of the relation between earth and world in "The Origin of the Work of Art," and the relation between

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of terms in Heidegger (and in the French rendering of Heidegger): those based on *Riss* (outline) and those based on *Zug, ziehen* (draw, withdraw) and their relation to the notion of "interlacing" (*Geflecht*) (in "Cartouches" [= *TP*, pp. 183–253], p. 193). Elsewhere, he applies the interpretation of *Riss* to the ambiguity left by Heidegger between a peasant woman's shoes and Van Gogh's painting of the latter and the significance of this ambiguity for the notion of truth as *adaequatio* and as unveiling (in "Restitutions" [= *TP*, pp. 255–382], p. 319 ff.).

[40] See above pp. 172–175.

[41] Heidegger, *OWA*, p. 65 [GA 5: p. 53].

[42] For the full definitions see: *OWA*, p. 46 [GA 5: p. 35} "That into which the work sets itself back and which it causes to come forth in this setting back of itself we called the earth. Earth is that which comes forth and shelters" (*Wohin das Werk sich zurückstellt und was es in diesem Sich-Zurückstellen hervorkommen lässt, nannten wir die Erde. Sie is das Hervorkommend-Bergende*) and *OWA*, p. 48 [GA 5: p. 37] "World is the self-opening openness of the broad paths of simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people" (*die sich öffnende Offenheit der weiten Bahnen der einfachen und wesentlichen Entscheidungen im Geschick eines geschichtlichen Volkes*). For further details of the latter see *OWA*, pp. 42, 44, 55 [GA 5: pp. 31, 33, 43–44].

[43] Heidegger, *OWA*, pp. 63–64 [GA 5: pp. 51–52].

the blank and the text the same dual status of rift and design. This parallel emerges in a more compelling way as one moves from consideration of the physical spacing represented by the blank to that of the semantic and ideal spacing that are ultimately more important not least for Mallarmé himself.

At this point, it will be useful to pass decisively from theory to practice with a juxtaposition of Mallarmé and Proclus that might be set in opposition to the juxtaposition of Plato and Mallarmé with which this chapter began. Obviously, the blank(s) between the two texts, providing simultaneously a rift and an outline, is (are) equally physical and semantic.[44]

Mallarmé—non-discursive truth and space | Proclus—discursive truth and space / The non-discursive Blank or Rift

⌜
Midnight sounds—the midnight when the dice had to be thrown[45]
⌞

[M] Readers of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* must pay especially close attention to its publishing history.[46] In the latter, there are three early stages of importance: the poem's appearance in the journal *Cosmopolis* in 1897,

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[44] At this point the reader may be referred to the discussion of textual juxtaposition in Gersh, *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, pp. 24–28 and that of the relation between textual juxtaposition and non-discursivity at ibid. pp. 168, 174, and 178, their results being extended in the present chapter. See also ibid. pp. xii–xv, 6, 20, and 101.

[45] Mallarmé, *Igitur, OC* 1, p. 474 "Minuit sonne—le Minuit où doivent être jetés les dés." For a detailed commentary on this work see Robert G. Cohn, *Mallarmé:* Igitur (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981). It should be noted that the text of *Igitur* which supplies a series of quoted extracts during the next part of this chapter will mark out not only a Heideggerian "Rift" between the texts of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* and Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid* but also an (a)semiotic square. This rift-square will exhibit a variety of relations of conjunction and disjunction between the texts: for example, *Igitur* is disjunct from the poem and the commentary [as $\bar{a}_1\ \bar{a}_2$] in emphasizing temporality, conjunct with the poem and disjunct from the commentary [as $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$] in emphasizing chance, conjunct with the poem and the commentary [as $a_1\ a_2$] in emphasizing figures, and disjunct from the poem and conjunct with the commentary [as $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$] in emphasizing metaphysics.

[46] Except where indicated otherwise, we will refer to Mallarmé's works according to Stéphane Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Bertrand Marchal (Paris: Gallimard, 1998–2003) (now replacing the edition of Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Gallimard, 1945) which is obviously still cited in most of the secondary literature). The English translations used in most of our extracts will be that of Mary Ann Caws, *Stéphane Mallarmé, Selected Poetry and Prose* (New York: New Directions, 1982) although occasional modifications will be made by the present author.

an extant set of proofs for the luxury edition to be published by Lahure (which never appeared in print), and the work's posthumous publication in Edmond Bonniot's edition for the *Nouvelle Revue Française*.[47] That the second stage has received much attention in recent years is justified since, as the important Mallarméan scholar Robert D. Cohn argued, the full intentions of an author for whom typography was an integral part of his enterprise could only be revealed in print.[48] However, despite the much-discussed shortcomings of its visual presentation, the first stage remains of interest. This is because Mallarmé supplied his poem with a preface in which he provided not only explanations of its innovative manner of expression but also observations about its relation to traditions of versification and speculations concerning its possible future influence in literary history.

Our concern here is primarily with what *Un Coup de dés* reveals concerning space—the importance of which was underlined by some of the text's earliest commentators.[49] It is therefore useful to begin with the comments about the space of the poem in the *Cosmopolis* preface.[50] Although this text displays the ambiguity typical of Mallarmé's prose writings, a relatively clear outline of a certain kind of spatial poetics can be discerned there.

[P] Given that the notion of "figure" or "schema" has an obvious importance in the present discussion, we can hardly do better than turn to the elucidation of this topic in Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*.[51] This work consists of two prologues, followed by detailed commentary on the definitions, on the postulates and axioms, and on the propositions of the Euclidean text. Our focus will be on the section devoted to the definitions.

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[47] For a summary of the technical details of this complex publication history see Thierry Roger, *L'Archive du Coup de dés. Étude critique de la réception d'*Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard *de Stéphane Mallarmé* (*1897–2007*) (Paris: Garnier, 2010), pp. 1035–1036.

[48] Robert G. Cohn, *Mallarmé's Masterwork, New Findings* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p. 78.

[49] For example, by Paul Valéry: "On 'A Throw of the Dice'", *Leonardo, Poe, Mallarmé*, trans. M. Cowley and J.R. Lawler (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 309–310.

[50] For an exhaustive discussion of the question of space in *Un Coup de dés* see Virginia A. La Charité, *The Dynamics of Space. Mallarmé's Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 1987). The present author is indebted to this analysis in connection with numerous matters of detail.

[51] Proclus, *In Primum Euclidis Elementorum Librum Commentarii*, ed. Gottfried Friedlein (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873). For the English version see *Proclus. A Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*, trans. G.R. Morrow (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1970).

> *Igitur descends the stairs of the human mind, and goes to the depths of things as the "absolute" that he is*[52]

The Euclidean definitions are as follows:

I A point is that which has no parts.
II A line is a length without breadth.
III The limits of a line are points.
IV A straight line is a line which lies evenly with the points on itself.
V A surface is that which has length and breadth only.
VI The limits of a surface are lines.
VII A plane surface is a surface which lies evenly with the straight lines on itself.
VIII A plane angle is the inclination to one another of two lines in a plane which meet one another and do not lie in a straight line.
IX Whenever the lines containing the angle are straight, the angle is called rectilinear.
X Whenever a straight line set up on a straight line makes the adjacent angles equal to one another, each of the equal angles is a right angle and the straight line standing on the other is called perpendicular to that on which it stands.
XI An obtuse angle is an angle which is greater than a right angle.
XII An acute angle is an angle which is less than a right angle.
XIII A boundary is that which is the limit of something.
XIV A figure is that which is contained by any boundary or boundaries.
XV A circle is a plane figure contained by one line such that all the straight lines falling upon it from one point among those lying within the figure are equal to one another.
XVI The point is called the centre of the circle.
XVII A diameter of the circle is a straight line drawn through the centre and terminated in both directions by the circumference of the circle, this straight line also bisecting the circle.
XVIII A semicircle is the figure contained by the diameter and the circumference cut off by it.

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[52] Mallarmé, *Igitur*, *OC* 1, p. 474 "Igitur descend les escaliers, de l'esprit humain, va au fond des choses: en 'absolu' qu'il est." To the extent that it can be gleaned from the fragments and sketches of this enigmatic metaphysical *conte*, the narrative of *Igitur* is basically as follows. We discover the character *Igitur* at midnight seated in a claustral chamber with drawn curtains and at a supreme point of consciousness where, as indicated by the position of the hour and minute hands of the clock, space and time are annulled. The hero is poring over a *grimoire* or "magic book" that has been handed down to him by his ancestors, this book being illuminated by a solitary candle. At the appointed hour, he will produce total darkness by blowing out the candle, throw the dice of universal chance, and through these acts discover the nature of true Meaning and Life (adapted with some modifications from Cohn, *Mallarmé*: Igitur, p. 2).

XIX The centre of the semicircle is the same as that of the circle.
XX Rectilinear figures are those which are contained by straight lines.
XXI Trilateral figures are those contained by three straight lines.
XXII Quadrilateral figures are those contained by four straight lines.
XXIII Multilateral figures are those contained by more than four straight lines.
XXIV Among trilateral figures an equilateral triangle is that which has its three sides equal.
XXV An isosceles triangle is that which has only two of its sides equal.
XXVI A scalene triangle is that which has its three sides unequal.
XXVII Further among trilateral figures a right-angled triangle is that which has one of its angles a right-angle.
XXVIII An obtuse-angled triangle is that which has one of its angles obtuse.
XXIX An acute-angled triangle is that which has its three angles acute.
XXX Among quadrilateral figures a square is that which is both equilateral and right-angled.
XXXI An oblong is that which is right-angled but not equilateral.
XXXII A rhombus is that which is equilateral but not right-angled.
XXXIII A rhomboid is that which has its opposite sides and angles equal to one another but is neither equilateral nor right-angled.
XXXIV Let quadrilaterals other than these be called trapezia.
XXXV Parallel straight lines are straight lines which being in the same plane and being produced indefinitely in both directions do not meet one another in either direction.[53]

⌜
The infinite emerges from chance, which you have denied. You mathematicians expired—I am projected absolute[54]
⌞

[53] There is an extensive modern literature on Proclus' philosophy of mathematics. In particular, see Annick Charles-Saget, *L'architecture du divin. Mathématique et philosophie chez Plotin et Proclus*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982); Ian Mueller, "Mathematics and Philosophy in Proclus' Commentary on Book I of Euclid's *Elements*," in *Proclus, Lecteur et interprète des anciens. Actes du colloque international du CNRS* (*Paris, 2–4 octobre 1985*), eds. J. Pépin and H.-D. Saffrey (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1987), pp. 305–318; Dominic O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived. Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); and Markus Schmitz, *Euklids Geometrie und ihre mathematiktheoretische Grundlegung in der neuplatonischen Philosophie des Proklus*, (Würzburg: Kőnigshausen und Neumann, 1997).

[54] *OC*, 1, p. 474 "L'infini sort du hazard, que vous avez nié. Vous, mathématiciens expirâtes—moi projeté absolu." Throughout the text of *Igitur*, we find poetic imagery fused with metaphysical terminology. Given that poetic imagery ought to be ambiguous and metaphysical terminology non-ambiguous, this fusion exemplifies the difficulty and profundity of Mallarmé's art. Presented in a slightly more systematic manner, the main items of imagery-terminology that occur in the extracts presented in this chapter might be interpreted as follows. Two senses of "infinite"—mathematical infinity (of division, addition) and semantic infinity (of semes, sememes); two senses of "chance"—mathematical chance (possibilities

For purposes of discussion, Proclus groups together propositions X–XII, XV–XVI, XVIII–IX, XX–XXIII, XXIV–XXIX, and XXX–XXXIV.[55] Each proposition or group of propositions then forms the basis of a relatively extended commentary in which it is not only the geometrical questions but also the relations between geometrical and philosophical questions that claim the writer's attention. The importance of Proclus' own contribution emerges most clearly in connection with the latter

[M] Given that the *Cosmopolis* preface begins somewhat disconcertingly by suggesting that it should not be read at all or else glanced at and forgotten,[56] modern critics have often paid relatively little attention to the detailed comments that follow. Now the question whether Mallarmé should be taken at his word in ignoring the preface is of considerable importance for the interpretation of *Un Coup de dés* itself, since the preface seems to suggest reading aloud—or perhaps silent reading—whereas the graphic technique of the poem suggests purely intellectual contemplation.[57] Obviously, an interpretation of the poem that aims to develop its "proto-deconstructive" tendencies will succeed more easily either by reducing the significance of the preface or by leaving in suspense the question of its role.

As regards the function of space, the prefatory remarks may be arranged into those dealing with physical space, those dealing with signifying space, and those dealing with ideal space. It is the physical space which is in question when Mallarmé speaks of the "blanks" (*blancs*) surrounding the words, of how the page functions as the basic unit just as the verse does in other poetry, of how "the paper intervenes" (*le papier intervient*) in order to produce a succession of these units, and of the dispersal of the single-page format of traditional lyric. The signifying space is indicated when the writer speaks of the "copied distance which mentally separates groups of words or words from one another" (*distance copiée qui mentalement sépare des groupes de mots ou les mots entre eux*) and of "the text's imposition of itself

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1–12 on two dice-cubes) and semantic chance (possibilities of activating semes, sememes); a notion of "Absolute" (absence of external relation in a totality); a notion of "the Absurd" (tension based on denial of law of contradiction): a notion of "Idea" (the above elements theoretically fixed); a notion of "Act" (practical enactment of the above elements); a notion of "Nothing." The last image-term is semantically the most complicated. See below note 125.

[55] In Heiberg's text of Euclid, def. XVIII = defs. XVIII–XIX of Proclus, def. XIX = defs. XX–XXIII of Proclus, defs. XX–XXI = defs. XXIV–XXIX of Proclus, def. XXII = defs. XXX–XXXIV of Proclus, and def. XXIII = def. XXXV of Proclus.

[56] For this preface see *OC* 1, pp. 391–392.

[57] On the ambivalent role of the preface see La Charité, *The Dynamics of Space*, chapter III, p. 106, n. 28.

at variable places, near or far from the latent guiding thread" (*des places variables, près ou loin du fil conducteur latent … s'impose le texte*), among the characteristics of this signifying space the syntactic aspect being introduced through allusions to the work's lack of narrativity, to the "fragmentary interruptions of a central phrase" (*arrêts fragmentaires d'une phrase capitale*), and to the material's shortcutting nature. It is the ideal space which is at issue when Mallarmé speaks of how images succeed one another in the order of the text, of the "prismatic subdivisions of the Idea" (*subdivisions prismatiques de l'Idée*), and of how the latter come together in a mental scene-setting.

The preface also develops a sustained analogy between the poem's text and a musical score. We shall not pursue this important question here beyond noting that with this analogy the temporal aspects—which had already supplemented the spatial criteria to some degree—begin to acquire prominence.[58] Thus, Mallarmé is able to introduce the notion of a speeding up or slowing down of items in the text—presumably according to their density on any given page—as well as that of static and mobile blocks of material. Nevertheless it is space which retains the primacy in the musical score if not in the musical performance.[59]

[P] The question of the relation between the geometrical and the philosophical influences Proclus' comments on the method of the Euclidean treatise. The Neoplatonic philosopher is careful to note that Euclid defines the point negatively by saying that it has no parts (I) but that he defines the line both affirmatively and negatively by saying that it is a length without breadth (II) and defines the surface both affirmatively and negatively by saying that it is that which has length and breadth only (V).[60] This implicit juxtaposition of the negative and affirmative and the attribution of primacy to the negative reveals that the manner of approaching the first principles of geometry—point, line, surface—exactly parallels our manner of approaching the first principles of reality—the One and the subsequent

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[58] For a development of the temporal aspects of *Un coup de dés* (and the musical analogies suggested in the *Cosmopolis* preface) see the essay of Pierre Boulez, "Sonate, 'que me veux-tu' ", in Pierre Boulez, *Points de repère*, ed. J.-J. Nattiez, 2nd ed., (Paris: Seuil 1985), pp. 163–175.

[59] Although the spatial aspects are perhaps more striking than the temporal aspects in *Un coup de dés*, not least because of the latter's typographic experimentation, the spatial and temporal aspects are equally significant for an understanding of Mallarmé's prose narrative *Igitur*. For example, see the discussion of the clock at midnight in the piece "Midnight" (*OC* 1, pp. 483–484), and the images of, the heartbeat, breathing, etc. in the piece "The Stairs" (*OC* 1, pp. 484–487).

[60] Proclus: *CEucl*. 94. 8–18, 96. 21–23, 114. 1–14.

hypostases. The commentator is also careful to point out that Euclid cultivates the propositional method. In Neoplatonism, propositional and discursive thinking is peculiar to the level of Soul and ranks in veracity below the non-propositional and non-discursive thinking characteristic of the level of Intellect.

However, the lower can reflect the higher as an image reflects its paradigm. Therefore, the proposition that the limits of a surface are lines (VI) reflects our intellective understanding of the limitation of nature's activity by soul, of soul's revolutions by intellect, and so forth.[61]

> ⌜
> *and so from the infinite are separated constellations and the sea, remaining reciprocal nothings on the outside, in order to permit their essence, united to the hour, to form the absolute present of things*[62]
> ⌞

The question of the relation between the geometrical and the philosophical also influences Proclus' comments on the content of Euclid's *Elements*. Since it is among these comments that the commentator's most important reflections on the nature of figures and schemata can be found, we should examine in somewhat greater detail what is argued concerning the more simple and the more complex geometrical entities, and what relation is envisaged between these geometrical entities and ontological principles.

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[61] *CEucl*. 115. 10–116. 3.

[62] *OC* 1, p. 483 "et que de l'Infini se séparent et les constellations et la mer, demeurées, en l'extériorité, de réciproques néants, pour en laisser l'essence, à l'heure unie, faire le présent absolu des choses." This passage occurs in a draft of the first episode of *Igitur*. According to the poet's own schema (*OC* 1, p. 474), the narrative of *Igitur* contains four episodes which seem to be understood as follows: *1*. "Midnight" (*Le Minuit*)—the hero resolves, in a spiritual sense, to die in order to live in a higher mode; *2*. "The Staircase" (*L'escalier*)—Igitur goes down into his unconscious in order to go up to an Infinite Idea; *3*. "The Throw of Dice" (*Le coup de dés*)—the hero performs a ritual gesture of suicide; *4*. "He lies down in the tomb" (*Il se couche au tombeau*)—the result of the ritual action. The extant materials indicate a further episode: "The Life of Igitur" (*Vie d'Igitur*) (*OC* 1, pp. 498–499) in which Igitur reflects on how his past has led to the present moment. Cohn places this episode between items *2* and *3* in Mallarmé's own schema. On the assumption that the basic drama of *Igitur* describes a series of attempts to overcome the linearity of time (see Cohn, *Mallarmé:* Igitur, pp. 35–37, 41, 124, 126), the five episodes may be interpreted metaphysically as follows: *1*. A resolve fixed at a zero-point in space and time with respect to the pursuit of the Infinite or the Absolute; *2*. Exploration of the "vertical" paradoxicality of mind and body; *2A*. Exploration of the "horizontal" paradoxicality of past and future; *3*. Return to the position of the first episode in a spiral motion—the resolve is no longer simply contemplated but enacted as the ritual "dice throw" gesture; *4*. Consequences flowing from the gesture (see Cohn: *Mallarmé:* Igitur, pp. 34–35, 70–71, 77).

[M] But at this point we should turn to Mallarmé's actual poem in order to observe how, in a practical sense, it articulates space. In considering this, one may temporarily leave aside the question of physical space and ideal space in themselves and concentrate on signifying space.

In fact, *Un Coup de dés* elaborates a remarkable technique whereby aspects of physical space surrounding the text extend the latter's signifying space.[63] In particular, the combination of physical space with text takes the form of encoding the various parameters of space—space alone, space together with type, and type alone—with certain signifieds: especially the unmediated and contradictory notions of paradox and chance, a set of unmediated and non-contradictory pairs: male-female, square-wave, constellation-ocean, which are analogous to one another, and the mediated and non-contradictory notions of life, life as art, and art.[64] The extension of signifying space by text takes a semantic form whereby the parameters of space encoded with signifieds supply connotations additional to those embodied in the words themselves, a syntactic form when the various parameters are employed in order to disrupt the normal meaning of the words, and semantic and syntactic form whereby the parameters of space encoded with signifieds supply connotations additional to those embodied in the words themselves and disrupt the normal meanings of the words.[65]

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[63] Because of the inherent typographic subtlety of the text and Mallarmé's well-documented care in correcting printed versions typographically, the selection of a particularly good edition for use is of major importance. In particular, the questions of the size of the type and amount of spacing must be taken into account. Moreover, the particular form of the double-page layout favored by Mallarmé must be maintained. The present author has primarily consulted Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le Hasard*, ed. M. Ronat (Paris: Change errant, 1980) for the French text. A version with French text and English translation on facing pages which unfortunately but inevitably distorts Mallarmé's intentions can be found in *Stéphane Mallarmé, Collected Poems*, trans. H. Weinfield (Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 124–145.

[64] We shall call these spatial "parameters" in order to avoid confusion with spatial "dimensions". The choice of terminology has been influenced by contemporary music-theoretical practice (for example, that of Boulez (see note 58)). For a detailed analysis of the distribution of type and space on a page-by-page basis in *Un Coup de dés* see La Charité, *The Dynamics of Space*, pp. 54–81. This treatment however differs somewhat from the "parametric" analysis pursued in the present chapter.

[65] In the interpretation of La Charité, the central issue is one of the tension between flexibility or impossibility of meaning and fixity or possibility of meaning—represented by the space and the type respectively—as perceived by both author and reader and in the relation between author and reader. For La Charité, the space is much more important than the type and, although the "narrative" of the text presents the central issue of (non-)signification in a

These procedures can be characterized in more detail as follows:[66]

1. The first parameter of physical space is space alone. It is represented by the white background of the printed page or the fold between printed pages. Being encoded with the signifieds of paradox and/or chance,[67] it extends signifying space semantically.

2. The second parameter: space together with type, is much more complicated. It embraces certain functions which are semantic in the manner described: for example, where the vertical or horizontal space delineated by the printed text[68]—or in relation to this spatiality the rectilinear or diagonal movement,[69] the density of words,[70] the varying density of words,[71] the actual number of words,[72] and the regular or irregular movement[73]—are encoded with the signifieds male, square, and constellation (together with various of their connotations) or alternatively female, wave, and ocean (together with their connotations) or the combination of these opposite signifieds. The designs produced by these techniques are mostly abstract but occasionally concrete. Thus, at one point we discover the outline of a toque signifying

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kind of allegorical mode, the signifying aspects of the poem take on a relatively subdued role. Although much indebted to this analysis, the present author's approach differs in that for La Charité space is mainly the destabilizing element and text the stabilizing element whereas for the present author space is both a de-stabilizing *and a stabilizing* element in the manner of the Heideggerian *Riss*. It is from the latter viewpoint that the more "parametric" approach to be pursued in the next few paragraphs will be necessary.

66 References to *Un Coup de dés* will be according to a numbering of the double pages as follows: 1 [= *OC* 1, pp. 366–367], 2 [= *OC* 1, pp. 368–369], 3 [= *OC* 1, pp. 370–371], 4 [= *OC* 1, pp. 372–373], 5 [= *OC* 1, pp. 374–375], 6 [= *OC* 1, pp. 376–377], 7 [= *OC* 1, pp. 378–379], 8 [= *OC* 1, pp. 380–381], 9 [= *OC* 1, pp. 382–383], 10 [= *OC* 1, pp. 384–385], 11 [= *OC* 1, pp. 386–387].

67 This symbolism has been well established in Mallarmé's other poems.

68 See Mallarmé's: *CD*, *passim*. Of course, the symbolism of spatial parameters is for Mallarmé as polysemous as the symbolism of words. Thus, the visual shape which is identifiable as a wave can also represent the pen and inkwell, the constellation of the Big Dipper, etc.

69 For example, there is a single wave pattern linking *CD*, pp. 1, 2, 5, and 9 and individual patterns or combinations of individual patterns on most pages. In contrast with the curved patterns are square patterns. For the latter see *CD*, p. 4. For the combination of curved and square patterns see *CD*, p. 9.

70 Thus *CD*, p. 4 has a maximum and *CD*, pp. 1–2 a minimum density.

71 In general, the wave patterns contrast a minimum initial density with a maximum final density as the text moves horizontally and vertically. In comparison with this, *CD*, pp. 4–5 exhibit a relatively uniform density.

72 Thus *CD*, p. 9 emphasizes a tetradic grouping.

73 For regular movement see *CD*, p. 8 and for irregular movement *CD*, p. 5.

art and at another the outline of a siren signifying the fusion of art and life.[74] The parameter of space together with type also embraces certain functions which are syntactic in the manner described: for example, where the position of type on the page allows words to be combined and the syntax to be dislocated to a high degree,[75] and where the grouping of type according to different sizes[76] or the presence/absence of capitals[77] allows words to be combined and the syntax to be dislocated in a more restrained manner. The parameter of space together with type embraces certain functions which are both semantic and syntactic: for example, where the vertical-horizontal space delimited but the printed text and the relation to that spatiality of a diagonal movement together with the grouping of type according to different sizes and the presence of capitals are encoded with the signifieds paradox and chance.[78]

3. The third parameter of physical space is type alone. It is represented either by individual letters and accents or by type-faces. Being encoded with the signifieds of male, square, constellation (together with various connotations) or their opposites in the former case[79] or with the signifieds of life and art in the latter,[80] it extends signifying space semantically.[81]

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[74] The figure of a toque occurs on *CD*, p. 7 and that of a siren on *CD*, p. 8.

[75] See *CD*, *passim*.

[76] Mallarmé specified five sizes of type. The largest occurs on *CD*, pp. 1–2, 5, 9, the next on *CD*, pp. 8–9, the next on *CD*, pp. 2–4, 6, 9–11, the next on *CD*, pp. 3–11, and the smallest on *CD*, p. 9. Since all type of the same size can be connected, these syntactic links form a counterpoint to the syntactic links within each page.

[77] Initial capitalization is employed sparingly. In the text we find the words "Abîme" on *CD*, p. 3, "Nombre" and "Esprit" on *CD*, p. 4, and "Fiançailles" on *CD*, p. 5 given individual emphasis. In this manner phrases beginning "Une …" on *CD*, p. 6, "La …" on *CD*, p. 8, and "Choit" on *CD*, p. 9 are distinguished syntactically by initial capitals. Finally, the words "Septentrion" and "Nord" and the main words in the phrase "Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés" are emphasized similarly on *CD*, p. 11.

[78] The phrase UN COUP DE DÉS JAMAIS N'ABOLIRA LE HASARD distributed across *CD*, pp. 1, 2, 5, and 9 in a diagonal pattern is both completed and initiated by the phrase 'Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés' place on *CD*, p. 11 in a straight line. Thus, the idea of the randomness stated by the words and indicated by the falling trajectory is paradoxically fused with the idea of determinacy implicit in the circle.

[79] For example, the letter *i* symbolizes male, and the letter *o* female on *CD*, pp. 6 and 8; the acute and grave accents symbolize a wave on *CD*, pp. 4 and 9, etc. The letter symbolism, at least, is well established in Mallarmé's other poems.

[80] i.e Roman and italic type. See *CD*, pp. 1–4, 9–11 for the former, *CD*, pp. 6–9 for the latter, and *CD*, p. 9 for the combination.

[81] That the interpretation advocated in the previous paragraphs may be quite close to one envisaged by Mallarmé himself is perhaps suggested by a couple of details which might

[P] The list of geometrical entities that Proclus selects for discussion in this part of his commentary begins with "limit" (*peras*). The commentator here contrasts the higher level of reality where what limits is prior to and independent of what is limited with the lower level where what limits is posterior to and dependent upon what is limited—the higher level being specified as that of Intellect, Soul, and Nature or that of forms "separable" (*chōrista*) from matter, the lower as that of sensible things, that of the contents of imagination, or that of forms "inseparable" (*achōrista*) from matter (I).[82] Later Proclus goes on to illustrate the presence of limits in the higher sphere by noting that the One furnishes the limit of Intellect, Intellect that of Soul, and Soul that of Nature; and the presence of limits in the lower sphere by noting that the line is limited by points, the surface by lines, and the solid by surfaces (VI).[83] As we shall see in following this account further, the number and type of limits provides the basis for his classification of figures.

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On one side, if the equivocation has ceased, a motion on the other side continues … and confusedly fills the equivocation … and in the uncertainty probably caused by the affirmative turn … a vision of the interrupted fall of panels is presented.[84]
⌞

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otherwise be thought insignificant. These are: *1*. that the actual language of the poem is by Mallarmé's own standards rather straightforward. This would suggest that the task of semantic intensification is being transferred to the spatial arrangement as such; and *2*. that Mallarmé had written his poem originally on graph paper. This would indicate that precise measurements in 2-dimensional space were crucial. These points (but not the present author's conclusions) are noted by La Charité, *The Dynamics of Space*, pp. 133–137 (lexicon) and pp. 157–158 (graph paper).

[82] *CEucl*. 85. 13–87. 16. The distinction between the two kinds of limit is an important index of Proclus' integration of Euclidean geometry within Neoplatonic ontology. Since Euclid deals exclusively with the lower kind of limit, he can legitimately defer its discussion until def. XIII. But since Proclus deals with both the higher and lower kinds of limit and believes that the latter is derived from the former, he must insert its discussion into the commentary on def. I. The change of perspective between Euclid and Proclus is also partially reflected in Proclus' commentary on def. XIII where he notes the distinction between "boundary" (*horos*)—applicable to surfaces and solids—and "limit" (*peras*)—applicable to surfaces, solids, and lines (*CEucl*. 136. 2–4).

[83] *CEucl*. 115. 10–116. 3.

[84] *OC* 1, p. 485 "D'un côté si l'équivoque cessa, une motion, de l'autre, dure … remplit confusément l'équivoque … et dans l'incertitude issue probablement de la tournure affirmative … se présente une vision de la chûte interrompue de panneaux." This passage and those quoted in notes 87, 92, 98, 100, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115 are drawn sequentially from the episode entitled "The Staircase"—see note 62. The passage provides an account of what one might term the "*X*-System" of *Igitur*, the process in which (at first theoretically)

The notions of "point" (*sēmeion*), "line" (*grammē*), "surface" (*epiphaneia*), and "solid" (*stereon*)—whose interpretation is reinforced by extensive borrowings from Pythagoreanism—also play a major role in Proclus' commentary on the definitions. Since each of these geometrical items enters into the composition of the next, we have a sequence of increasing complexity. Within that sequence we can discern a relation to the first principles of reality, since each term participates in both the primary Limit and the primary Infinity while each term not only corresponds to one of the hypostases: Intellect, Soul, Nature, but is present in each hypostasis in some manner (I).[85] We can also discern a relation between geometry and arithmetic since the point corresponds to the number one, the line to the number two, the surface to the number three, and the solid to the number four (II).[86]

⌜
as if it were itself one who, endowed with the suspended motion, turned it back on itself in the resulting dizzy spiral[87]
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the hero attempts to lead to the infinite Idea by descending into the unconscious self, and to overcome the linearity of time by means of a kind of dialectical-semantic process. Using the passage which conceptualizes the ritual of the dice-throw as the template (see note 165), the process can be unfolded through the following stages: *1*. Affirmation of chance (mathematical) [a_1, $\bar{a}_2$] is opposed to denial of chance (mathematical) [$\bar{a}_1$, a_2]; *2*. Affirmation of chance (mathematical) is combined with denial of chance (mathematical) producing absurdity (denial of law of contradiction) and thereby a transition from mathematical chance (not self-contradictory) to semantic chance (self-contradictory); *3*. Affirmation of chance (semantic) [a_1, a_2] is opposed to denial of chance (semantic) [$\bar{a}_1$, $\bar{a}_2$]. In the extract cited above, the ceased equivocation corresponds to stage *1*, the motion filling the equivocation or its cessation and the uncertainty stage *2*, and the affirmative turn stage *3*. The interrupted fall of the panels corresponds to the square structure [$a_1\,\bar{a}_2$, $a_1\,a_2$, $\bar{a}_1\,a_2$, $\bar{a}_1\,\bar{a}_2$] and to its repeatability. The structure can be applied in the same manner to mathematical and semantic *infinity*. See further notes 87 and 165.

[85] *CEucl*. 87. 16 ff. Here, the analogy is between the point and Intellect. See n. 86.

[86] *CEucl*. 97. 18–99. 14. In def. IV, an analogy between the point and the One as first principle is established according to the teaching of Plato's *Parmenides* (*CEucl*. 104. 5–6).

[87] *OC* 1, p. 485 "comme si c'était soi-même, qui, doué du mouvement suspendu, le retournât sur soi en la spirale vertigineuse conséquente"—the diachronic aspect of the repeatable *X*-Structure is emphasized with the reference to the spiral. What we have called the *X*-system corresponds to the type of thinking that Cohn, *Mallarmé:* Igitur, pp. 42–58 calls "tetrapolarity" or "polypolarity." The latter pioneered the interpretation of Mallarmé along these lines in various publications since ca. 1949 and influenced (perhaps also via Jean Hyppolite, "Le *Coup de Dés* de Stéphane Mallarmé et le message," in *Les études philosophiques* 13 (1958), pp. 463–468) the discussions in Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1974) and in Jacques Derrida, *La dissémination*, p. 293. Cohn is right to emphasize the distinction

The list of geometrical entities selected by Proclus for discussion in this part of his commentary also includes "angle" (*gōnia*). The commentator here responds to a traditional question whether an angle should be defined as a quality, as a quantity, or as a relation by citing the solution of his teacher Syrianus: an angle is "a qualified quantity, constituted by such-and-such a relation" (*pepoiōmenon poson kai hupo toiaide schesei sunistamenon*) (VIII).[88] Angles sometimes occur in surfaces and sometimes in solids, the former being subdivided into angles on simple and angles on mixed surfaces.[89] Since an angle is a "bond between several lines and planes" (*desmos ... tōn pollōn grammōn kai epipedōn*), it also has a special relation to the higher world (IX).[90] Thus, angles on surfaces are associated with unifications among the more immaterial things, angles on solids with unifications among things proceeding to the lower. Circular angles are associated with what enfolds intelligible multiplicity, rectilinear angles with what binds sensible multiplicity, and mixed angles with what unifies the sensible with the intelligible. (IX)[91]

[M] In reading Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés*, it is necessary to complement observation of how the poem in a practical sense articulates space with analysis of how the work in a theoretical sense describes space. Regarding this further aspect, most commentators have tended to understood *Un Coup*

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between the more traditional "Hegelian" triadic approach (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) and this tetradic approach (the three terms plus an "antisynthesis"), but does not fully elaborate the crucial element of transition between the mathematical (non-contradictory) and semantic (contradictory) modes. His depiction of the Mallarméan system in terms of a transition between a vertical polarity and a horizontal polarity instead of between the four terms of an (a)semiotic square, i.e.

a1 a2
| *a1 ā2 — ā1 a2*
ā ā2

instead of

does not change the central issue.

[88] *CEucl.* 121. 12–126.6. The proponents of the three possible definitions are Eudemus the Peripatetic, Carpus of Antioch, and Euclid himself. Syrianus is introduced via Proclus' usual periphrasis 'our leader' (*ho hēmeteros kathēgemōn*).

[89] *C Eucl.* 126. 7 ff.

[90] *CEucl.* 128.26–129.6.

[91] *CEucl.* 129. 10 ff.

de dés as simultaneously an account of cosmic creation, of poetic creation, and of the relation between these. We shall confine ourselves here to the theoretical description of space in the second context.

[P] The kind of discussion pursued in connection with the more simple geometrical entities is now extended by Proclus to the more complex ones.

> *This time, no more doubt; certainty is reflected in the evidence: in vain, as the memory of a lie whose consequence the memory was, did the vision of a place appear again*[92]

Taking his starting-point from a definition of figure as something resulting from a change produced in things that can be added to or subtracted from or altered in any manner or from a passivity in such things,[93] Proclus embarks upon an implicit twofold classification of the types of figure *a*. in a kind of "horizontal" or geometrical manner and b. in a kind of "vertical" or philosophical manner, the two sets of figures being derived from a kind of transcendent source described as "the one universal figure" (*hen koinoteron schēma*) (XIV).[94] According to categorization *a*. which is supported with the authority of Plato's *Parmenides* and has already been utilized in the commentaries on the earlier Euclidean definitions, figures can be divided into rectilinear, circular, and mixed (VII).[95] According to categorization *b*. there is a relation to the first principles of reality since each type of figure participates in both the primary Limit and the primary Infinity, while each type of figure not only corresponds to one of the hypostases: Intellect, Soul, Nature but is present in each hypostasis in some manner (IV, XV–XVI).[96] The analysis does not end here, since with a further recourse to categorization *a*. rectilinear figures are divided into trilaterals, quadrilaterals, and multilaterals, and with a further recourse to categorization *b*. these trilaterals, quadrilat-

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[92] *OC* 1, pp. 485–486 "Cette fois, plus nul doute; la certitude se mire en l'évidence: en vain, réminiscence d'un mensonge, dont elle était la conséquence, la vision d'un lieu apparaissait-elle encore"—At this point, Igitur achieves a moment of (relative) stability in the unfolding of the *X*-System corresponding to a state of self-consciousness.

[93] *CEucl.* 136. 20 ff. Proclus cannot rest content with the Euclidean def. XIV because he wishes to proceed simultaneously in a geometrical and in a philosophical way. See n. 53.

[94] *CEucl.* 146. 3–4. Cf. 138. 22 ff.

[95] *CEucl.* 117. 17–22. Proclus gives—as examples of these three types of figure in surfaces—the plane, the spherical surface, and the cylindrical or conical surface.

[96] *CEucl.* 103. 21–104, 25, 107. 11–109. 4, 146. 24–148. 4. For corresponding relations to number see *CEucl.* 161. 18 ff.

erals, and multilaterals are associated with the first principles of reality in various ways (XX–XXIII, XXIV–XXIX, XXX–XXXIV).[97]

The tendency to blend geometrical and ontological considerations is strongly reinforced in certain other arguments of the *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*.

> *such for example as the awaited interval was to be, having in fact for lateral walls the double opposition of the panels, and for the front and back, the opening of a void doubt echoed by the prolongation of the noise of the panels*[98]

First, Proclus argues that it is not only the limits, the sequence: point—line—surface—solid, the angle, and the various circular, rectilinear, and mixed figures which relate to the first principles of reality but certain other components of figures. This can be illustrated in the case of the circle which, because of its simplicity, self-identity, and homogeneity, surpasses other plane and solid figures (XV–XVI). Now the "centre" (*kentron*), "distances from the centre" (*diastaseis tou kentrou*), and "circumference" (*periphereia*) of the circular geometrical figure correspond to the remaining, procession, and reversion of the first principles' activity, although in the lower realm the centre, lines from the centre, and circumference are "in one place, and in another, and in another" (*allachou ... allachou ... allachou*) whereas in the higher realm the remaining, procession, and reversion are contained in unity.[99]

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[97] *CEucl.* 162. 6–164. 8, 166. 14 ff., 171. 1 ff. There are also further divisions—for example, of triangles into right-angled, obtuse, and acute; of quadrilaterals into parallelograms and non-parallelograms—together with further ontological relations. Cf. *CEucl.* 166. 14 ff., 169. 10 ff.

[98] *OC* 1, p. 486 "tel que devait être, par exemple, l'intervalle attendu, ayant, en effet, pour parois latérales l'opposition double des panneaux, et pour vis-à-vis, devant et derrière l'ouverture de doute nul, répercutée par le prolongement du bruit des panneaux." The four sides of the square represented by the *X*-Figure are here clearly suggested in the references to the lateral walls, the double opposition of the panels, and the front and back. There are also clear indications of a spatial square in the walls and panels, of a temporal square in the awaited interval (future) and prolongation (past), and perhaps also of a combined spatial-temporal square.

[99] *CEucl.* 146. 24–147. 3. 153. 10 ff., 155. 9–20. The lines from the centre are said to correspond to procession because they are indefinite in number and length. Since Proclus also observes that the centre relates to the primary Limit, the distances from the centre to the primary Infinity, and the circumference to the primary Mixed, the parts of the circle enjoy the same kind of relation to the first principles of reality as do the various types of figure.

> *and doubled by the ambiguity explored, the perfect symmetry of the foreseen deductions denied its reality; no possible mistaking, it was the consciousness of self—for which even the absurd itself was to serve as a place—succeeding*[100]

Second, Proclus argues that it is not only to the hypostases of Intellect, Soul, and Nature that the simpler and more complex geometrical entities relate but also the *hyparxes* ("subsistencies") of the gods. In his system, the gods provide the basis for the organization of the higher world in general, since their triadic structuring is the paradigm of the triadic structuring within each hypostasis.[101] The importance of this theology is intimated by the frequent references to the gods in commenting on the Euclidean definitions. These include the following:

i. Having described the relation between plane and solid angles and between the different types of plane angle and the higher world, Proclus introduces the gods. He notes that Philolaos the Pythagorean consecrated the angle of a triangle to certain gods, that of the square to others, assigning different angles to different gods, or one angle to a plurality of gods or one god to a plurality of angles. Similarly Theodoros of Asine interpreted the demiurgic triangle by establishing certain gods at the sides and certain gods at the angles (IX).[102] The form of citation indicates Proclus' approval of these doctrines.

> *it is present equally in one and the other surface of its shining and secular walls*[103]

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[100] *OC* 1, p. 486 "et dédoublée par l'équivoque explorée, la symétrie parfaite des déductions prévues démentait sa réalité; il n'y avait pas à s'y tromper c'était la conscience de soi (à laquelle l'absurde même devait servir de lieu)—(sa réussite)." The passage contains a further reference to Igitur's achievement of self-consciousness together with a reference to the self-contradictory tension within the *X*-Figure (= "the absurd").

[101] On the structuring see Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*, pp. 143–151; on the notions of *hypostasis* and *hyparxis* see Stephen Gersh, *Kinēsis Akinētos. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), pp. 30–38.

[102] *CEucl*. 130. 7–21. The source of Philolaos' teachings is identified as his *Bacchae* at *CEucl*. 22. 15 ff.

[103] *OC* 1, p. 486 "se présente également dans l'une et dans l'autre face des parois luisantes et séculaires"—contains a further reference to the *spatial* axis of a combined spatial-temporal square.

ii. The commentator outlines a hierarchy of types of figure. There are figures produced by art. Above these come figures produced by nature, above these psychic figures—especially the X assigned to soul in the *Timaeus*—, and above these intelligible figures. Finally, there are "unknowable and ineffable figures of the gods" (*agnōsta kai aphrasta schēmata tōn theōn*). These provide boundaries to all the lower figures in the universe (XIV).[104]

> *retaining of it only in one hand the opal brightness of its knowledge*[105]

iii. Proclus begins the discussion of specific figures by speaking about the circle which holds primacy. Here we are also urged to contemplate the entire "series" (*seira*) of circles which extends from the divine unities through the intelligible, psychic, and natural spheres to things contrary to nature. On all levels, the circle is related to the activity of higher principles and especially to its remaining and reverting moments. Later Proclus turns to the circle's components of centre, lines from centre, and circumference. At the head of this series comes the primal Limit, the primal Infinity, and a secret order of gods described by Orpheus: a circle which immediately gives rise—via a "triadic god" (*triadikos theos*)—to the series of rectilinear figures (XV–XVI).[106]

> *and in the other, its volume, the volume of its nights, now closed, of the past and future*[107]

iv. Both the straight line and rectilinear figures in general relate to the gods. The former resembles the deities governing the procession of otherness and motion, the latter the deities governing the procession of formal aspects within the generative process as a whole (XX–XXIII).[108]

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[104] *CEucl*. 137. 3–138. 10.

[105] *OC* 1, p. 486 "ne gardant d'elle que d'une main la clarté opaline de sa science."

[106] *CEucl*. 148. 5–150. 13 and 155. 9–156. 5. Cf. *CEucl*. 114. 25–115. 8 for the Pythagorean theory connecting a hidden triadicity of the circle with the primacy of the triangle among rectilinear figures. Cf. *CEucl*. 90. 11–91. 10 for an argument that not only the components of the circle but also the components of the sphere relate to orders of gods.

[107] *OC* 1, p. 486 "et de l'autre son volume, le volume de ses nuits maintenant fermé: du passé et de l'avenir"—contains a further reference to the *temporal* axis of a combined spatial-temporal square.

[108] *CEucl*. 164. 7–17.

> *which the pure shadow, having attained the pinnacle of myself, perfectly dominates*,[109]

v. The triangle has a close relation to the gods. Both the Pythagoreans and the *Timaeus* emphasize the role of the triangle in the production of physical elements. According to the commentator, Philolaos was correct in dedicating the angle of the triangle to the four gods Kronos, Ares, Hades, and Dionysus since these are the causes of aerial, fiery, earthy, and watery things respectively (XXIV–XXIX).[110] The argument continues in passages vi and vii.

> *and finished, outside themselves. While before and behind is prolonged the explored lie of the infinite*[111]

vi. The square has a close relation to the gods. Through the rightness of its angles it imitates the integrity and through the equality of its sides the stability of divine power, so that among quadrilateral figures it "especially bears the image of divine substance" (*diapherontōs … eikona pherein tēs theias ousias*). According to the commentator, Philolaos was correct in assigning the angle of the square to the three goddesses Rhea, Demeter, and Hestia since earth receives emanations from each of these (XXX–XXXIV).[112] The argument concludes in passage vii.

> *the darkness of all my apparitions gathered together, now that time has ceased and divides them no longer*[113]

vii. Philolaos' association of the angle of the triangle with four gods and the angle of the square with three gods reveals the interpenetration of all things.

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[109] *OC* 1, p. 486 "que parvenue au pinacle de moi, l'ombre pure domine parfaitement"—contains a further reference to Igitur's achievement of self-consciousness.

[110] *CEucl*. 166. 14–168. 2.

[111] *OC* 1, p. 486 "et finis, hors d'eux. Tandis que devant et derrière se prolonge le mensonge exploré de l'infini"—contains a further reference to the *spatial* axis of a combined spatial-temporal square. The square also suggests a transition from mathematical to semantic infinity. See notes 54 and 84.

[112] *CEucl*. 172. 22–174. 2.

[113] *OC* 1, p. 486 "ténèbres de toutes mes apparitions réunies, à présent que le temps a cessé et ne les divise plus."

Four times three yields the same product as three times four. Moreover, this product of twelve is the number of the cosmos. That Philolaos further associates the angle of the dodecagon with Zeus brings him into agreement with the teaching of Plato's *Phaedrus* (XXXIV).[114]

> ⌜
> *in the void of which I hear the pulsations of my own heart. I do not like this sound: this perfection of my certainty bothers me*[115]
> ⌞

[M] The structure of Mallarmé's argument in *Un Coup de dés* has traditionally been interpreted as based on five statements:[116]

> A. UN COUP DE DÉS JAMAIS N' ABOLIRA LE HASARD ("A throw of the dice will never abolish chance") (*CD*, pp. 1, 2, 5, 9).
>
> B. SOIT LE MAÎTRE ("Though it be/Let there be … the master") (*CD*, pp. 3, 4).
>
> C. RIEN N' AURA EU LIEU QUE LE LIEU ("Nothing will have taken place but the place") (*CD*, p. 10).
>
> D. EXCEPTÉ PEUT-ÊTRE UNE CONSTELLATION ("Except perhaps a constellation") (*CD*, p. 11).
>
> E. Tout Pensée émet un Coups de Dés ("All thought emits a throw of the dice") (*CD*, p. 11).

That these statements form a group is indicated by the size and style of type in statements A, B, C, D (large capitals for A, medium capitals of B, C, D); and by repetition of words in statements E, A. A semantic question of the relation between the monosemous and the polysemous is suggested by the contrast of statements A, C, D, E (which are less polysemous) and statement B (which

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114 *CEucl*. 174. 2 ff. The numerological argument is—at least in Proclus' report—somewhat elliptical. I have attempted to make its primary meaning explicit in my paraphrase.

115 *OC* 1, p. 486 "dans le vide duquel j' entends les pulsations de mon propre coeur. Je n' aime pas ce bruit: cette perfection de ma certitude me gêne …"

116 For a summary of various standard interpretations of *Un Coup de dés* based on grouping according to type sizes and type faces and for the problems of most of them see La Charité, *The Dynamics of Space*, pp. 88–91. The most common approach is to distinguish four components: *a*. The material printed with the largest capitals [= A in our analysis]; *b*. A secondary theme [= B,C,D in our analysis together with other phrases in the same type size]; *c*. An "aside" based on material printed in large italics (on *CD*, pp. 6–9); and *d*. An "episode" consisting of material printed in standard type size whose main development is marked out by eight words beginning with initial capitals and which concludes with the heavily capitalized final statement (= E in our analysis). For possible structural relations between *Un Coup de dés* and *Igitur*, see Cohn, *Mallarmé*, Igitur, pp. 73–74 and 129–131.

is more polysemous). A grammatical question of the relation between the syntactic and the non-syntactic is suggested by the combination of the five statements with the adjacent textual materials. A logical question of the relation between the propositional and the non-propositional is suggested by the comparison of statements A, C (which as paradox and tautology respectively constitute two different zero-degrees of propositional logic).

The unfolding of this argumentative structure depends upon the establishment of certain textual-conceptual relations which seemingly prepare the ground for a narrative of the poetic process itself. In other words, *Un Coup de dés* can be understood as describing the process of its own generation through the interaction between author, reader, and text. The textual-conceptual relations that are most important are:

I. *Space and Chance*

In the context of Mallarmé's poem in general and specifically where the poem refers to signifying space, chance seemingly represents the infinite range of possibilities whereby monosemy passes over to polysemy, the syntactic to the non-syntactic, and the propositional to the non-propositional.

II. *Idea and Space*

The context of Mallarmé's poem implies a distinction between ideal space and signifying space. Since Idea implies a simultaneously dominant and dependent relation—perhaps as in Hegelian Idealism—of the monosemous, the syntactic, and the propositional over their opposites, Idea subsists in a complementary but contrary relation to space.[117]

III. *Space and Paradox*

In the context of Mallarmé's poem in general and particularly where the poem refers to signifying space, paradox apparently constitutes the maximal degree of the possibility whereby monosemy coexists with the polysemy, the syntactic with the non-syntactic, and the propositional with the non-propositional.

The narrative of Mallarmé's poem may therefore be interpreted as unfolding in five stages.

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[117] "Idea" (*Idée*) is one of Mallarmé's most important notions. Redolent of Platonism and Hegelianism, and closely connected with music, it combines the meanings identified here with other senses.

1. The writer (reader) first confronts the text. Any finite selection s/he might make among its infinite semantic possibilities—the "throwing of the dice"—does not reduce the possibilities outside the selection.
2. The writer (reader)—the "master"—makes his/her selection.
3. The writer (reader) still confronts the text. Any finite selection s/he has made among its infinite semantic possibilities—the "place"—does not even reduce its possibilities within the selection.
4. However, some structuring—the "constellation"—has been effected.
5. This is because the relation between the reductive process and linguistic polysemy is actually circular.[118]

The five stages of this narrative can be analyzed in terms of a double triad and a circle. The main triad consists of three terms—apparently corresponding to temporal phases—associated with the writer's (reader's) confrontation with the text (1, 2, 3). These phases could presumably be superimposed on another in various positions and on various levels, interrupted, etc. The subordinate triad consists of three terms—presumably corresponding to non-temporal moments—associated with the result of the writer's (reader's) confrontation with the text (3, 4, 5). The circle is produced because the ending of the fifth phase and the beginning of the first phase have an element in common: the throw of the dice.

[P] Relations between geometry and ontology, also for Proclus, imply relations between geometry and epistemology. Here, one may perhaps distinguish questions regarding *a*. epistemology in general, *b*. contemplative versus productive aspects, *c*. semiotic epistemology.

a. In the second prologue to his commentary, Proclus had distinguished three levels of form—in discursive reason, in the imagination, and in sensory objects—and two levels of matter—underlying the imaginative and the sensible respectively, and had argued that geometrical operations relate

[118] Of course, the narrative of Mallarmé's poem is actually more complicated than we have here suggested it to be. There are clearly further stages of the argument; for example, the account of the rise of art in pp. 6, 7, 8; and further philosophical themes: for example, that of tetrapolarity discussed extensively by Robert G. Cohn in connection with *Igitur*. For our present purposes at least, it is not necessary to survey all the various possible interpretations of its spatial element—of which an excellent example might be the "existential" reading suggested by Ernest Fraenkel, *Les Dessins trans-conscients de Stéphane Mallarmé. À propos de la typographie de "Un coup de dés,"* (Paris: Nizet, 1960)—since the possibility of multiple interpretations itself is probably the primary message conveyed by the text.

to all three levels of form yet have a particular connection with the intermediate one.[119] It is against this background that he articulates the epistemological parameters of geometry in commenting on the definitions, emphasizing the reality of geometrical entities in the intelligible and sensible domains—the boundaries and figures do not "subsist in mere thought by abstraction" (*kat' epinoian psilēn huphestanai / kat' epinoian de monēn kai kata aphairesin echein tēn hupostasin*) but exist in and prior to physical objects (I, XIV).[120] This passage shows the intelligible and the discursive-rational figures as levels above the imaginative and sensible. Proclus also underlines the reciprocity of intelligible and sensible perceptions of geometrical entities—by means of certain *logoi* ("reason-principles") projected within our souls we "understand sensible things paradigmatically and intellectual and divine things iconically" (*ta men aisthēta paradeigmatikōs, ta de noera kai theia ginōskomen eikonikōs*) (XIV).[121] This passage shows the discursive-rational and the imaginative figures as levels between the intelligible and the sensible. Again in the second prologue, Proclus had described the geometer's activity as directed not to a sensory figure—since he attempts to abstract—nor to a discursive-rational figure—since he compares several circles—but to an imaginative figure, and had argued that the imaginative object of his demonstrations itself also constituted a unity of the three figures.[122] It is by developing these assumptions that he describes the epistemological process of geometry in connection with the definitions, underlining the psychic motion whereby indivisible geometrical entities are transformed into extended geometrical entities—the soul "projects the reason-principles of the figures on the imagination as though in a mirror" (*proballei peri tēn phantasian hōsper eis katoptron tous tōn schematōn logous*) (I, XIV).[123] The

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[119] *CEucl.* 50. 10–52. 3.

[120] *CEucl.* 89. 14–19, 139. 22–26. Proclus' argument is rendered particularly complicated by his need to reconcile: 1. the Platonic notion of *dianoia* with the Aristotelian notion of *phantasia* and 2. the Platonic notion of really existent and the Aristotelian notion of rationally abstracted universals (both 1 and 2 having wide implications for any theory of geometrical entities). However, the immediate target of Proclus' remarks is Stoic nominalism.

[121] *CEucl.* 140. 13–18.

[122] *CEucl.* 53. 18–55. 6.

[123] *CEucl.* 141. 3–9. Cf. 96. 6–15. Two further aspects of imagination should be noted here: 1. Proclus' matter of imagination is assimilated to Aristotle's "intelligible matter" (*hulē noētē*)—he appends a note dealing with the question to what extent it is or is not justified to call the imagination "passive intellect" (*nous pathētikos*) as Aristotle does at one point—; 2. his matter of the imagination is also treated as "like a place" (*hoion … topos*) (*CEucl.* 96. 6–11). On the issues discussed in this paragraph see D. Gregory MacIsaac, "*Phantasia* between Soul and Body in Proclus' Euclid Commentary," in *Dionysius* 19 (2001), pp. 125–135, and id., "Noēsis,

passage uses the simile of the mirror in order to show that soul, in projecting the reason-principles, is actually contemplating itself.[124]

> *and as I was obliged, in order not to doubt myself, to be seated across from this mirror*[125]

b. Thanks to the verbal connection in Greek between "to project" (*proballein*) and "problem" (*problēma*), the notion of projection suggests a shift from a purely contemplative to a partly productive activity. This in its turn has implications not only for geometry but also for theurgy.

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dialectique et mathématiques dans le Commentaire aux *Éléments* d'Euclide de Proclus," in *Études sur le Commentaire de Proclus au premier livre des* Éléments *d'Euclide*, ed. A. Lernould, (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2010), pp. 125–138.

[124] This is because the reason-principles that the soul projects (specifically onto the imagination, in the case of geometry) are already present within it in a latent mode. See *CEucl*. 45. 21–46. 3 and *Elements of Theology*, prop. 176, 154. 26–34. The doctrine of projection is of great importance for Proclus' theory of knowledge in general, since it functions as an interpretation of the traditional Platonic notion of recollection and replaces the Aristotelian notion of abstracting forms from sensible things. For a discussion of these questions see Carlos Steel, "Breathing Thought. Proclus on the Innate Knowledge of the Soul," in *The Perennial Tradition of Neoplatonism*, ed. J.J. Cleary (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997), pp. 293–309, Christoph Helmig, "What is the Systematic Place of Abstraction and Concept Formation in Plato's Philosophy? Ancient and Modern Readings of *Phaedrus* 249b–c," in *Platonic Ideas and Concept Formation in Ancient and Medieval Thought*, eds. G. van Riel and C. Macé (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), pp. 83–97 and id., "Proclus and Other Neoplatonists on Universals and Predication," in *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 19 (2008), pp. 347–380.

[125] *OC* 1, p. 498 "et comme j'étais obligé pour ne pas douter de moi de m'asseoir en face de cette glace." This quotation comes from the brief sketch of the episode entitled: "The Life of Igitur." In a narrative addressed to his ancestors, Igitur here describes his attempts to arrest the flow of time. The scene in front of the mirror is connected with this spiritual exercise for the reasons discussed in another important text dealing with Mallarmé's metaphysics—the letter to Henri Cazalis of 14 May, 1867 (*OC* 1, pp. 713–716)—where the poet reports his horrifying experience of "Nothingness" (*le Néant*) after which he had to look into a mirror in order to confirm his own existence. In the narrative of *Igitur* as a whole, Nothingness has a very close relation to the Absolute in the sphere of human decision making in that the hero will lose all—undergo psychic death (and deny physical immortality)—in order to gain all, this action representing a kind of general *existential* interpretation of the dice-throw (see Cohn, *Mallarmé*, Igitur, pp. 49–51 and 70–71). The notion of Nothingness also has many more specific senses in Mallarmé's poetry: for example, a "vertical" sense of psychic impotence, a "horizontal" sense of psychic *ennui*, and a zero-point between these two dimensions (ibid., pp. 8–9, 47 n. 33, 70). Moreover, the experience of Nothing is inseparable from the poetic artifact that it engenders, as the "place" is inseparable from the "constellation" at the end of *Un Coup de dés* (ibid., pp. 6, 40). In addition to all these connotations of Nothingness, the mirroring in the passage quoted above also suggests the reflective relation implicit in the oppositions of the *X*-Figure.

[M] This account of Mallarméan poetics drawn from *Un Coup de dés* can be supplemented by drawing upon the famous notebook which, having been left among the poet's posthumous papers, Jacques Scherer entitled "Le Livre" and edited for publication in 1957.[126] Interpretation of the notebooks has been controversial. In particular, scholars have attempted to clarify the relation between this material and the extant poem *Un Coup de dés* on the one hand and between this material and the project of a *Grand'Oeuvre* frequently mentioned by Mallarmé on the other. Such issues are connected with the further questions whether the poem represents a stage in the development of the project or an indication of the latter's abandonment. Robert G. Cohn has argued persuasively through the analysis of contemporary testimonies and of earlier Mallarméan texts that there is a coherent unity of purpose underlying "Le Livre," the poem, and the project. He has especially revealed the extent to which the more overtly poetical materials in "Le Livre" represent an early sketch for *Un Coup de dés* in the form of a quasi-theatrical performance.[127] In the light of this analysis, we shall attempt to extract ideas from the notebook on certain points. These are: i. the nature of poetic language as a polysemous intensification of everyday language; ii. the non-syntactic and non-propositional form of this language viewed in terms of its content and in terms of its structure; iii. the nature of the polysemous non-syntactic and non-propositional language and the space which it entails.

i. In the Mallarméan "Livre," many fragments illustrate the polysemous expansion of language. Here, we read about the proposed performance of a work which is both literary and theatrical in a setting where the first item is a lacquer box placed in front of an audience,[128] this box consisting of a series of compartments into which unbound pages of the text are inserted and which allow the selection and permutation of the pages.[129] These actions by producing various textual combinations lead to a controlled polysemy[130] which is extended through various reader-text relations, suggested by correlations between the number of the pages and the number of the seats in the auditorium.[131] At the commencement of the performance, the "opera-

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126 Jacques Scherer, *Le "Livre" de Mallarmé. Premières recherches sur les documents inédits*.
127 See Cohn, *Mallarmé's Masterwork*, pp. 13–20.
128 Mallarmé, *Livre* 192 (A), 195 (A).
129 *Livre* 192 (A), 195 (A).
130 *Livre* 107(A), 108 (A) refer to the multiplicity of interpretations.
131 See *Livre* 107 (A), 182, 193 (A).

tor" (*opérateur*) enters to the sound of a gong. As described in a sequence of fragments, this operator in conjunction with symbolic gestures selects pages for reading aloud, permutating the pages and especially combining pairs of pages.[132] Later the operator exits with part of the text, returning for a second session at a further stroke of the gong.[133] This selection and permutation of the numbered pages of the text in the compartments of the box will be different in each of a carefully specified number of performances.[134] Moreover, the controlled polysemy produced by this textual aggregation[135] is extended through further reader-text relations indicated by correlations between the number of pages and the number of printed editions to follow the sessions.[136] The final item in the setting of the proposed performance is a chandelier placed above the audience. Since we have read elsewhere that such a fixture, through its unique ability to refract light in the multiplicity of its droplets, symbolizes the "Idea" realized in all poetry,[137] the polysemous expansion of language enters once again into that fusion of book, religious ritual, and theatre which constitutes "Le Livre."[138]

ii. That the language of this work is inherently non-syntactic emerges from the reflection on content. For example, in passages of the sketch certain isolated non-syntactic words are arranged on the page according to the semantic connotations which they possess[139]—these forming nuclei for the elaboration of text through the imposition of syntax—while in other parts there are groups of non-syntactic words arranged on the page according to the semantic connotations which they share or do not share.[140] Other fragments reveal that some measure of syntactic elaboration from the

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[132] *Livre* 192 (A)-195 (A).

[133] *Livre* 91 (A), 106 (A)-107 (A), 132 (A), 192 (A), 194 (A).

[134] *Livre* 107 (A), 110 (A), 113 (A), 129 (A)-130 (A), 132 (A), 143, 175 (A).

[135] *Livre* 105 (A), 107 (A)-108 (A), 181 (A)-182 introduce very large numbers of permutations.

[136] See *Livre* 108 (A), 113 (A)-114 (A), 130 (A)-133 (A), 189 (A).

[137] For mention of the chandelier see *Livre* 50 (B), 86 (B). Its symbolic meaning is discussed by Scherer: *Le "Livre de Mallarmé*," pp. 63–66. For mention of the Idea see *Livre*. 84 (B)-85 (B).

[138] The theatrical aspect is mentioned in *Livre* 129 (A), 175 (A) and the religious in *Livre* 83 (B). The theory regarding fusion of genres—which "Le Livre" ultimately transcends—will be discussed below.

[139] See *Livre* 80 (B). One should note that such patterns form visual ideograms, although they represent a stage in composition rather than a finished product. The descriptions of the performance of "Le Livre" do not mention, although they do not exclude, visual aspects of textuality.

[140] See *Livre* 102 (A)-106 (A). Scherer noted that these passages include and envelop the loose sheets.

non-syntactic words had been completed,[141] that the association of semantic patterning and numbering was strict in what Mallarmé terms "the equation under a god Janus, total, proving itself" (*equation sous un dieu Janus, totale, se prouvant*),[142] and that the initial arrangement of words according to their semantic connotations particularly reflected the arrangement of genres.[143]

That the language of the work is fundamentally non-propositional emerges from reflection on structure. The crucial element here is the association of existence and proof in the phrase: *prouvant que c'est cela* which occurs in several fragments,[144] for with these words Mallarmé in effect contrasts the reality or truth aimed at by classical ontology and the reality or truth attainable in a work of literature. In the former case, language when articulated into propositional form attempts to represents facts whereas in the latter, language not reducible to propositional form serves only to represent itself. This literary truth is variously described as self-identity, inverse repetition, otherness in sameness, circularity, and doubling.[145] More precisely it arises in the text's relation to itself as performance—where the operator in the manner described[146] reveals the identities within selected dualities in the segmentation of the text,[147] these dualities being explicitly connected with existence, proof, and interpretation[148]—and also in the text's relation to itself in diffusion: i. e. the multiplication of printed editions or copies.[149] Of course, Mallarmé for whom the world ends in a book considers literary truth to be the most perfect and comprehensive kind.[150]

iii. The polysemous non-syntactic and non-propositional language of "Le Livre" implies a certain notion of space. Given that several fragments speak

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141 See *Livre* 168, 168 *bis*, 169 (A).

142 See *Livre* 105 (A).

143 See *Livre* 87 (A)-88 (A), 160 (A), 199 (A).

144 *Livre* 112 (A). Cf. ibid. 128 (A) *preuve … que c'est cela*.

145 *Livre* 94 (A) *identité avec soi … répéter en sens inverse … un et un autre le même … est-ce commencer par la fin? … dédoubler …*

146 See *Livre* 193 (A).

147 See *Livre* 41 (A), 89 (A), 189 (A).

148 For existence see ibid. 200 (A); for proof *Livre* 112 (A); for interpretation *Livre* 41 (A), 173 (A).

149 See *Livre* 108 (A), 113 (A)-114 (A), 130 (A)-133 (A), 189 (A).

150 We have spoken of the association of the non-syntactic and the non-propositional with content and structure respectively. But in fact, the Mallarméan *Livre* is constructed on the assumption that content and structure are ultimately inseparable, and that the subject-matter of the work is the process of literature itself. See Scherer's discussion of *Livre* 16 (A)-26 (A) at *Le "Livre" de Mallarmé*, pp. 132–136.

of the positioning of lines on a page as the first two dimensions and the superimposition of lines on successive pages as the third dimension of Euclidean space,[151] it seems likely that Mallarmé is extending the polysemous signification of the 2-dimensional space of the page utilized in *Un Coup de dés* into a polysemous signification of the 3-dimensional space of the book in "Le Livre." If this interpretation is correct, then the macroprocesses of polysemy dominating in the latter work parallel the microprocesses of polysemy dominating in the former.[152] But what are these processes?

[P] Now from the *geometrical* viewpoint, we must consider the distinction between a theorem and a problem. In the second prologue, Proclus explains the Euclidean classification of geometrical elements—these having the character of propositions rather than of entities—into *1*. "principles" (*archai*)—those propositions which are self-evident or more evident—, and *2*. "consequences" (*sumperasmata*)—those which are derived from the previous—; and within *1* the classification into *a*. "axioms" (*axiōmata*)—those propositions which are both self-evident and conceded—, *b*. "hypotheses" (*hupotheseis*)—those which are not self-evident but are conceded—, and *c*. "postulates" (*aitēmata*)—those which are neither self-evident nor conceded—; and within *2*. the classification into *a*. "problems" (*problēmata*)—those propositions involving the construction of geometrical figures—, and *b*. "theorems" (*theōrēmata*)— the demonstration of geometrical figures' properties.[153] Having explained the classification, Proclus immediately turns to a controversy surrounding the problem. In reality, geometry is founded upon the interrelation of problems and theorems since, just as the productive sciences participate in theory, so do the theoretical sciences take up problems analogous with productions. Speusippus and his followers had argued that, since geometry deals with objects which do not come to be, whereas problems involve the construction of something, geometry's propositions must be theorems only. However, Menaechmus and his school had maintained that problems can be divided into two kinds: those that provide something that has been sought and those that see the properties of a given thing. According to Proclus, both authorities

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[151] *Livre* 40 (A)-41 (A).

[152] This, of course, precisely shows the analogy between the "visual" and the "textual" ideogram.

[153] *CEucl.* 75. 5 ff.

are right since geometrical problems do not involve objects which come to be as mechanical problems do, while the discovery of theorems in geometry involves recourse to imagination and materiality. Thus, geometry is dependent simultaneously upon problems and theorems even though—since every problem participates in the theoretical but not every theorem in the problematic—theory remains predominant.[154]

It is this notion of productive activity which connects the scientific activity of geometry with the religious activity of theurgy.

Now from the *theurgic* viewpoint, the ontological hierarchy of figures underlying geometry—natural, psychic, intelligible, and divine—is of central importance. In the geometer-philosopher's search for the divine, he finally approaches through this hierarchy certain ineffable figures which provide the boundaries to everything below. This is where theurgy whose name signifies productive rather than contemplative activity ("god" (*theos*) + "work" (*ergon*)) enters into the picture. According to Proclus, our approach to those ineffable figures is achieved by the performance of certain rituals which employ "cult images" (*agalmata*) of the gods and the "combination of figures" (*alla allois ... schēmata*)—in order to "imitate" (*apeikazesthai*, etc.) divine properties and powers. Some divinities are represented by "characters" (*charaktēres*), some by "forms" (*morphōmata*) or "shapes" (*tupoi*) of which some are standing and some sitting, some are heart-shaped or spherical or otherwise, some are simple and some composite, while some are stern or benign or fearful (XIV).[155] Although Proclus is not specific here, it is possible to grasp why he believes theurgy to parallel, supplement, and transcend geometry. In the first place, the classification of theurgic figures parallels the classification of Euclidean figures. Even if the ineffable characters and the anthropomorphic shapes differ somewhat from geometrical figures, the references to spherical figures and to simple and composite figures parallel certain details in the geometrical classification. In the second place, the relation between contemplation and production in theurgy parallels and inverts the relation between contemplation and production in geometry. Both arts depend upon the interrelation of these two aspects—as opposed to philosophy which is purely contemplative in nature. However, in geometry it is ultimately the contemplative and in theurgy ultimately the productive which dominates.[156]

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154 *CEucl.* 77. 12 ff.

155 *CEucl.* 138. 5–22.

156 In addition to this text, it is possible to detect theurgic overtones in Proclus' reports of theological teachings regarding the triangle and square in Philolaos' treatise: for example,

An illustration of the connection between the scientific activity of geometry and the religious activity of theurgy can be found in Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic*, dissertation xiii. This treatise comments on the discourse of the Muses in *Republic* VIII, 546a ff. which explains how even the best constituted state becomes subject to dissolution when its rulers fail to observe the best times for procreation in accordance with certain mathematical calculations.[157] Proclus explains that commentary on this very obscure passage regarding the "marriage number" can be mathematical, dialectical, or hieratic in character and—within the mathematical—in an arithmetical, geometrical, musical, or astronomical mode.[158] Therefore after an extensive discussion of predominantly geometrical character, he introduces his own adaptation of a method employed by Nestorius "the divine" of finding what is termed in astrology the chronocrator of the year.[159] Proclus' adaptation combines two aspects: the astrological, whereby the correct time for conception is calculated and the hieratic, whereby certain efficacious verbal formulae are produced, the latter representing the names of divine powers.[160] What interests us particularly here is the manner of generating these theurgic names through the manipulation of space.

The procedure is as follows.[161] A first stage consists of the establishment of a visual schema in which a right-angled scalene triangle of 90° on the vertical side, 120° on the horizontal side, and 150° on the hypotenuse—representing a geometrical interpretation of the marriage number—is inscribed within a circle on which are marked in positions fixed in relation to the circle 12 consonants—representing the zodiac signs and also the bodily level of being—and in positions mobile in relation to the circle 7 vowels—representing the planets in their various aspects to one another and also the psychic level of being. In the visual schema, the triangle remains fixed

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where he describes the Pythagorean thinker as "consecrating" (*anatithenai*) these figures or their parts to various gods (*CEucl.* 167. 2). Other passages with theurgic overtones are *CEucl.* 90. 11 ff., 98. 17–18, 155. 3–4 (all of which quote from the classic text used by the theurgists: the *Chaldaean Oracles*).

157 Proclus' dissertation is entitled *Melissa* ('the bee') because this insect is sacred to the Muses.

158 Proclus: *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*, ed. W. Kroll (Leipzig: Teubner, 1899–1901) II.66.16–17. Cf. II.34, 25 ff., II.36.12 ff., II.40.1 ff., II.43.20 ff.

159 *CRemp*. II.64. 6.

160 *CRemp*. II.66.1 ff. Proclus justifies this combination of the astrological and the hieratic by appealing to Plato's statement at *Rep*. V, 459e and 461a that the copulation of the chosen pairs should be accompanied by prayers and sacrifices.

161 *CRemp*. II.64.5 ff.

in position while the entire circle is rotated in accordance with the diurnal movement of the heavenly bodies.[162]

In the second stage of the procedure, the theurgist forms "names" from the consonants and vowels appearing either on the horizontal side and the hypotenuse of the triangle or on the vertical and horizontal sides of the triangle which are then chanted. Here, further rules are applied.[163] First, one begins the names with a vowel, continues with consonants, and ends with vowels; secondly, the theurgist either employs the letters read off from the horizontal side followed by those from the hypotenuse or employs the letters read off from the vertical side followed by those from the horizontal side;[164] thirdly, among the vowels, one aspirates those representing favorable planets and does not aspirate those representing unfavorable planets.

> *Igitur simply shakes the dice—a motion, before going to rejoin the ashes … he closes the book—snuffs out the candle … and, folding his arms, lies down on the ashes of his ancestors … the Absolute has disappeared*[165]

Another illustration of the connection between the scientific activity of geometry and the religious activity of theurgy can be found in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* where Plato's convoluted narrative of the Demi-

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[162] At *CRemp*. II.64. 14–16 Proclus refers to the inscription of a figure. That a figure should be drawn follows not only from the kind of operation to be performed but also from the requirements of geometrical and (especially) theurgic practice. That letters are inscribed on the figure naturally reinforces the ambiguous geometrical and theurgic meaning of the latter.

[163] We have distinguished the diagrammatic and the linguistic stages more clearly than does Proclus in his narrative.

[164] The two versions of the procedure result from the fact that applications are envisaged to both 7-month and 9-month pregnancies resulting from the conception.

[165] *OC* 1, pp. 477–478 "Igitur secoue simplement les dés—mouvement, avant d'aller rejoindre les cendres … il ferme le livre—souffle la bougie … et, croisant les bras, se couche sur les cendres des ancêtres … l'Absolu a disparu." This passage depicting the action of the dice-throw comes from among the sketches of the episode entitled: "The Throw of Dice." and should be coupled with another passage outlining the theory underlying the same action (*OC* 1, p. 476). Here, Mallarmé describes the three stages of the dialectical-semantic process discussed in note 84, clearly linking chance with both the absurd and the infinite: "Bref dans un acte où le hazard est en jeu, c'est toutours le hazard qui accomplit sa propre Idée en s'affirmant ou se niant" [stage *1: chance + non-contradictory opposition*]. "Devant son existence la négation et l'affirmation viennent échouer. Il contient l'Absurde—implique" [stage *2: chance + transition to contradictory opposition = the Absurd*], "mais à l'état latent et l'empêche d'exister: ce qui permet à l'Infini d'être" [stage *3: chance + transition to non-contradictory opposition = Infinite*}.

urge's fashioning of the substance of the World-Soul is explained in considerable detail. The final stage of this narrative has the Demiurge cut the whole substance down the middle into two strips, place the strips crosswise at their middle points, bend the ends of the strips round in a circle, fasten the strips to one another opposite the point where they crossed, make an inner and an outer circle out of the crossing strips, give the circles a uniform motion in the same place, and name the outer circle's motion after "the same" and the inner circle's after "the other" (*Tim*. 36 c). The explanation of this passage in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* consists of four stages: first, an explanation of Plato's argument as whole; secondly, discussion of the apparent conflict between the supposed "homoiomereity" of Soul and the construction here described; thirdly, an explanation of some specific words used by Plato; and fourthly, a note on the symbolic letter in the soul: the Greek letter *chi* (χ) formed by the crossing strips.[166] For present purposes, we shall confine ourselves to some remarks about the content of the last stage of Proclus' explanation.

Proclus begins by noting that this text makes it possible, if it is permitted to express his personal opinion, to glimpse the "ineffable secrets" (*ta aporrhēta*) within Plato's doctrine: namely, that the Demiurge was not only the first "giver of names" (*onomatothetēs*) in conferring the two names on the circles, but also the revealer of the soul's "substantial magic letter" (*ousiōdēs charactēr*) in forming the letter χ from the two strips. The doctrine was transmitted by Plato to the sages that followed him and especially to the theurgists.[167] According to Proclus, there are magic letters common to all souls and also magic letters peculiar to individual souls: for example, those of Heracles, Pentheus, Agave, and indeed of Plato himself.[168] Only the gods can know and reveal the magic letters peculiar to individual souls. However, Plato "contemplated and wrote down" (*etheasato … anegrapse*) the magic letter common to all souls—beginning from the World Soul—when he revealed the Demiurge as "inscribing the life-giving magic letter in

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166 Proclus: *CTim*. II. 252. 21 ff. Strictly speaking, the four stages of this explanation concern the lemma of the *Timaeus* describing the inner and outer circles and the conferring of their names (*Tim*. 36c 4–6). However, in order to make his own interpretation clear, Proclus also introduces ideas derived from the immediately previous lines in Plato's text.

167 *CTim*. II. 255. 24–256. 3. For the doctrine of the substantial magic letter cf. Proclus, *C Remp*. II. 143. 20 ff.

168 On the theurgic doctrine implied here see Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire, Nouvelle édition par M. Tardieu*, (Paris: Études augustinennes 1978), pp. 252–256, etc.

the substance of the soul and giving the names to its intellectual circles."[169] Proclus continues by noting that the Demiurge conferred the names on the two circles by drawing the latter from his own substance, since he "is characterized" (*charaktērizomenos*) especially by the same and the other as two "Kinds of Being" (*genē tou ontos*) to the extent that he configures matter according to form by means of otherness and reduces multiplicity to unity by means of sameness.[170] The *Chaldaean Oracles* allude to these two processes in speaking of the Demiurge as "flashing with intellectual cuts" (*noerais men straptein tomais*) and as "filling all things with love" (*erōtos de emplēsai panta*).[171] Thus, the circle of the same and the circle of the other are both divine names in bearing, in one way among the Kinds of Being and in another way among the intellectual gods and in another way among the intelligible gods, the "symbol" (*sunthēma / sumbolon*) of the intelligible cause of sameness and the symbol of the nature of otherness respectively.[172]

c. Among the epistemological consequences of this interrelation of geometry and theurgy is a heightened emphasis upon symbolism and imitation. In many of the passages already cited we have found references to the fact that geometrical entities "signify" (*sēmainein*) various divine properties or are "symbols" (*sumbola*) of such properties: for example, in stating that the centers and poles of the spheres symbolize the divinities called Iynges (I), the angle the divine coherence (IX), the right-angle the divine measure (X–XII), and the straight line the divine procession and infinity (XX–XXIII).[173] In fact, it is likely that all relations between geometrical entities and principles of reality are understood as primarily symbolic in nature, such semiotic relations being not less than real relations but a special kind of real relation. In the same or similar passages one can also find references to the notion that geometrical entities "imitate" (*apomimeisthai*) various divine properties or are "images" (*eikones*) of such properties: for example, in arguing that the centers and poles of the spheres imitate the divine connectivity (I), the obtuse angle the extension of forms and the acute angle the dividing and

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[169] *CTim*. II. 256. 10–12 *engrapsas tēi ousiāi tēs psuchēs ton zōiogonikon autēs charaktēra kai onomata theis tais noerais … periphorais*.

[170] *CTim*. II. 256. 13–19.

[171] *CTim*. II. 256. 24–27. Proclus also invokes the authority of "Orpheus" at *CTim*. II. 256. 19–24.

[172] *CTim*. II. 256. 27–257. 8.

[173] *CEucl*. 173. 4–5 (*sēmainein*); 91. 2–4, 128. 26–27, 128. 26–129. 3, 164. 8–11 (*sumbolon*).

moving cause (X–XII), and so forth.[174] Now in Proclus' philosophy, symbolism and imitation are closely associated since both involve similarity rather than the duality of sameness and otherness and both involve reversion rather than the duality of remaining and procession.

[M] Concerning the macro-processes of polysemy in the Mallarméan "Livre," the most important thing to note is certainly the inherent dynamism of the project, given that the apparently fixed volume—thanks to the play of detachable leaves—becomes mobile, and from death becomes life.[175] In actual fact, the structure involves a balance of static and dynamic elements since it is only the placing of mobile leaves within fixed envelopes, the limited permutation of leaves, and the alternation of forward and backward sequences which disrupt the normal linearity of reading.[176] The mathematical calculations pervading the sketches contribute to both the static and dynamic aspects: in the former case by establishing precise limits for the permutation of materials and for the production of meanings through that permutation, and in the latter by producing a set of meanings independent of the set produced by semantic-syntactic criteria.[177]

The relation between the macro-processes of "Le Livre" and the micro-processes of *Un Coup de dés* now becomes clear. In particular, the mobility of the leaves within envelopes produces a disruption of the linearity of reading and an increase in the polysemy of the text analogous to those engendered by the spatial distribution of text on a page. However, as a consequence of the analogous relation between the spatialities of book and page respectively, Mallarmé's comments regarding the interpretative ramifications of "Le Livre" take on their full significance.[178] Thus, the quasi-mathematical specification of the range of polysemy implied by fragments referring to the number of pages read in each session, to the relation between the number of pages and the number of auditors, and to the number of sessions needed to complete the reading is of considerable importance.[179] The

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[174] *CEucl.* 176. 3 (*apomimeisthai*); 91. 4–7 (*apeikonizesthai*); 132. 25–133. 1 (*eikōn*).

[175] Mallarmé, *Livre* 191 (A). Cf. *Livre* 99 (A), 183 (A), 189 (A).

[176] For fixed envelopes see *Livre* 99 (A), 193 (A); for permutation *Livre* 88 (A), 159 (A), 192 (A)-195 (A); for reversal *Livre* 44 (A), 146 (A)-147 (A), 159 (A)-160 (A), 192 (A). In *Livre* 40 (A) the notion of a single completely immobile line (to be printed in gold) is suggested.

[177] Quasi-mathematical discussions fill many pages of the sketch. See especially *Livre* 39 (A)-40 (A), 48 (A), 112 (A), 138, 201(A).

[178] For specific references to interpretative questions see *Livre* 107 (A)-108 (A), 111 (A), 173 (A).

[179] The connection between mathematics and semantics is particularly close in *Livre* 105 (A)-106 (A). See further for pages and sessions *Livre* 111 (A), 173 (A); for pages and auditors

liberation from fixed conceptions regarding the interpretative situation indicated by fragments speaking of the operator's role as a supplement to the author in writing the text, as the means by which the text is able in a certain sense to "write itself," and as a member of the public engaged in reading the text is of no less significance.[180]

Afterwords

In the main body of this chapter, we have been unfolding the further implications of Derrida's "The Double Session" by juxtaposing passages from Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* and Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*. This juxtaposition has indicated a relation between physical and semantic space and a mediating function (separating and joining) of space itself, the relation being simultaneously described and embodied in order to reveal the method of deconstruction with special reference to its performative aspects. It has also been possible to observe an initial emphasis placed on the terms separated and joined by the space—Proclus and Mallarmé, philosophy and literature, philosophical geometry and literary geometry—but then shifted to the space itself that separates and joins—the *Blank*. It has moreover become apparent that, since Mallarmé rather than Proclus has been the source of these spatial notions, in exploring or enacting the relations between Proclus and Mallarmé, predominance has been assigned to the second term: namely, Mallarmé, this in its turn producing a situation in which Proclus' notion of *emanation*—implying a bilateral and continuous relation between the terms—has been *intensified*.

A particularly important role in Mallarmé's exploration of geometry has been played by the "blank" or "white" (*blanc*). To recapitulate and expand the most relevant points made earlier, the blank—in the sense of the white background of the printed page—represents a physical space which may be considered as signifying a semantic space or a syntactic space.[181] As physical space, it can be considered in relation to itself—as infinite graphic

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Livre 92 (A), 110 (A), 193 (A); for completion of the reading *Livre* 108 (A), 110 (A), 129 (A), 132 (A), 143, 175 (A).

[180] For authorial control see *Livre* 64 (B), 200 (A) (the latter together with notion of proof). For the operator as quasi-author see *Livre* 192 (A), 194 (A). Liberation of the text is implied in *Livre* 42 (A), 113 (A), 117 (A), 195 (A), 201 (A).

[181] See pp. 179–180.

possibility—or in relation to the letters and words that demarcate it. As semantic space or syntactic space, it can be understood in relation to itself—as infinite semantic or syntactic possibility—or in relation to the semes or syntagms that define it. In the literary practice of *Un Coup de dés*, the blank considered in separation from type is correlated with such signifieds as "chance" and "paradox," and the type considered in separation from the blank with such signifieds as "square" and "constellation." The blank considered together with type operates in a different manner. As used in *Un Coup de dés* and *Le Livre*, this not only signifies the possibility of syntactic and semantic combination but also activates the possibility of syntactic and semantic combination. Thus, blank considered together with type has a performative role.

In the course of reading Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* especially in a juxtaposition with Proclus' *Commentary on Euclid's Elements* mediated through the semantic and physical space provided by the extracts from Mallarmé's *Igitur* themselves, a particularly close relation between the functions of space and *chance* has emerged. We will conclude this chapter by returning to Derrida in order to draw attention to the latter's elaboration of this line of thought on a broader intertextual basis provided by a reading of Plato, Heidegger, and the Greek atomic theory, and with a methodology that is simultaneously constative and performative in character.

In Derrida's essay "Mes chances,"[182] a first cluster of problems concerns the nature of communication viewed primarily as a relation between speaker and audience. Given that a speaker does not know the expectations or expertise of each member of this audience—the essay records a lecture given to a mixed group of specialists in psychoanalysis and literature—he must make a certain calculation in order to communicate with them. Within the range of this calculation, he can to varying degrees leave each hearer's comprehension and reaction to chance or attempt to control that comprehension and reaction, a situation reflecting the twofold nature of language itself as simultaneously inclining towards indeterminacy by multiplying the effects of chance and towards determinacy by diminishing those effects. As an illustration of the calculation, the speaker who is now compared with

[182] Jacques Derrida, "Mes chances. Au rendez-vous de quelque stéréophonies épicuriennes," in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 45 (1983), pp. 3–40. An English translation is available. See "My Chances/ Mes Chances. A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies," in *Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis and Literature*, eds. J.H. Smith and W. Kerrigan, (Baltimore-London: Johns Hopkins University Press), pp. 1–32.

someone casting a pair of dice throws out two questions: the first introducing the notion of a descent, the second connecting the notion of an ascent with literature.[183]

Chance has often been—and this is both a coincidence and a law[184]—associated with a descent. This descending motion appears in the classical theory of Epicurus and Lucretius[185] according to which atoms are continually falling through a void yet are subject to a "swerve" (*parengklisis, clinamen*) which causes them to collide and form visible bodies. The same descending motion occurs in Plato's *Phaedrus* where the human soul falls into the body in a disseminating manner, in the doctrine of original sin, in the Heideggerian notion of "thrown-ness" (*Geworfenheit*), and somehow in Lacan. These parallels are becoming increasingly loose[186] because Derrida is both employing philosophical doctrines to explain aspects of the nature of language, and illustrating the transition from more determinate to less determinate aspects of language by his intertextual practice. In fact, the atomic theory of Epicurus and Lucretius underpins both purposes. On the one hand, it clearly explains language since the Greek term *stoicheion* means not only atom but also alphabetic letter, and since the theory presents a certain balancing of necessity and chance as occurs in language—Derrida adds to these traditional interpretations of Greek physics his own conclusions that the atomic "coagulation" (*sustrophē*) parallels intertextual connections.[187] On the other hand, the atomic theory exemplifies a linguistic practice by appearing initially as a source of explanations of language but afterwards—thanks to an accidental connection between Lacan and Epicurus via a reference to Poe—as an instance of language's random product.

Of Derrida's two aleatoric questions, the first was concerned with descent and the second with ascent. We shall follow the latter only as far as it completes the notion of descent.

Beginning with a Freudian intertext which habitually associates chance with the use of proper names, numbers, and letters,[188] Derrida undertakes an examination of two fundamental concepts which are closely connected in his theory of language: non-significance and repeatability. From the view-

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[183] Leaving aside the third moment in the discourse where the sum of the dice is calculated.

[184] *MesC*, p. 9 / *MyC* p. 5.

[185] The importance of atomism is also shown by the subtitle of the essay.

[186] For example, the link with Heidegger is—using Freudian terminology—a "violent condensation."

[187] It also includes the idea of "falling upon."

[188] *MesC*, p. 20 / *MyC*, p. 15.

point of a moment of sameness, non-significance represents a structure whereby the trace[189] is not necessarily linked to a meaning or an object, and repeatability a structure allowing that trace to be detached from a given context. Considerable emphasis is placed on "the apparent solidity of its[190] structure, of its type, its stereotypie" (*la solidité apparente de sa structure, de son type, sa stéréotypie*).[191] From the viewpoint of a moment of otherness, however, non-significance and repeatability imply a. difference in relation to the network of other traces, b. a dynamic (and presumably) temporal process of variation according to contexts, and c. divisibility into other units of the same type. Although Derrida does not explain precisely how the moments of sameness and otherness connect within the structure of non-significance and repeatability, there is no need to press the text further on this point.

The Freudian intertext is now expanded in the direction of the Democritean-Epicurean atomic theory—said to have been repressed by the Platonic tradition of antiquity—and Saussurian linguistics,[192] and Derrida asks the rhetorical question why he has chosen to formulate this discussion of a linguistic matter primarily in terms of a doctrine of ancient physics. The answer is interesting not only because it simultaneously takes the form of explaining language, where the writer declares his aim of extending the discussion beyond the verbal sign and even beyond human language as such, and of exemplifying a linguistic practice, where he suggests that it is an atomic swerve which removes him from a simplistic treatment of the linguistic issue; but also for the manner in which atomism and Saussurianism are connected with the theory stated earlier. Conceived in terms of atomic theory, the moment of sameness in the structure of non-significance and repeatability is the shape of the atom which influences the kinds of aggregates produced, and the moment of otherness the descent and swerve of the atom in the void which forms the cause of aggregation as such. Understood in terms of linguistics, the moment of sameness in that structure is the signifier which is as yet unattached to its signified, and the moment of otherness the attachment of the signifier to a variety of signifieds according to the principle of arbitrariness.

Although the essay "Mes chances" begins by formulating the problem of communication in terms of a relation between speaker and audience, its

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189 Equivalent to language in this context.
190 i.e. the trace's.
191 *MesC*, p. 21 / *MyC*, p. 16.
192 *MesC*, pp. 22, 24 / *MyC*, pp. 16, 18.

author is concerned for the most part with viewing the problem in terms of the relation between one text and another. We have already seen the exploration of these textual relations in the complex formed by Democritus, Plato, Heidegger, and Lacan in the section on descent, and in the complex formed by Democritus and Saussure—framed by Freud and citing Hegel in addition—in the section on ascent. However, Derrida actually extends his use of such textual relations beyond the range which we need to consider here. In fact, the entire text is constructed as a series of six "strokes of luck" (*chances*): a reference to Poe, another to Baudelaire, and four more to Freud, the phrase itself suggesting both the title of the essay and its prominent theme of calculation. Naturally, the relations between speaker and audience and between one text and another represent two facets of the same problem of intertextuality, given that a speaker reads a text and audience members respond using various internalized texts of their own.

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MT *De Mystica Theologia*. In *Corpus Dionysiacum II*. Edited by Günter Heil and Adolf M. Ritter Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991.
Oeuvres complètes de Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite. Translated by Maurice de Gandillac. Paris: Aubier-Montagne, 1943.
Pseudo-Dionysius. The Complete Works. Translated by Colm Luibheid. New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987.

Eckhart, Meister

Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke, herausgegeben im Auftrage der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936–

EE *Expositio libri Exodi*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 2.

EG *Expositio libri Geneseos*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 1/1.
EI *Expositio sancti Evangelii secundum Iohannem*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 3.
ES *Expositio libri Sapientiae*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 2.
PGOP *Prologus generalis in Opus Tripartitum*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 1/1.
POP *Prologus in Opus Propositionum*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 1/1.
Pred. *Predigten*. In *Die deutschen Werke* 1–4.
Maître Eckhart, Sermons. Introduction and Translation by Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache. Paris: Seuil, 1974–1979.
QP *Quaestiones Parisienses*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 5.
Serm. *Sermones*. In *Die lateinischen Werke* 4.

Iamblichus

Myst. *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum. Les mystères d'Égypte*. Edited by Édouard des Places. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1966.

Plato

Platonis Opera. Edited by John Burnet. 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899–1907.
Leg. *Leges*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 5. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
Parm. *Parmenides*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 2. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.
Translated by Francis MacDonald Cornford in *Plato and Parmenides. Parmenides*' Way of Truth *and Plato's* Parmenides. *Translated with an Introduction and a Running Commentary*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1939.
Phaedr *Phaedrus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 2. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.
Translated by R. Hackforth. In *Plato. The Collected Dialogues*. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. New York: Random House, 1961.
Phileb. *Philebus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 2. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.
Translated by R. Hackforth in *Plato's Examination of Pleasure. A Translation of the Philebus with Introduction and Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958.
Rep. *Res Publica*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 4. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.
Translated by Paul Shorey. In *Plato. The Collected Dialogues*. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. New York: Random House, 1961.
Soph. *Sophista*. In *Platonis Opera*, Vol. 1. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1900.
Translated by Francis MacDonald Cornford in *Plato's Theory of Knowledge. The* Theaetetus *and the* Sophist *of Plato. Translated with a Running Commentary*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935.

Symp. *Symposium*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 2. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.

Theaet. *Theaetetus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 1. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.
Translated by Francis MacDonald Cornford in *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*.
The Theaetetus *and the* Sophist *of Plato. Translated with a Running Commentary*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935.

Tim. *Timaeus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 4. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.
Translated by Francis MacDonald Cornford in *Plato's Cosmology. The Timaeus of Plato. Translated with a Running Commentary*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937.

Plotinus

Enn. *Enneades*. In *Plotini Opera*. Edited by Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolph Schwyzer. Bruxelles: Édition Universelle, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951–1973.
Translated by A. Hilary Armstrong. *Plotinus*. 7 volumes. London—Cambridge, Mass.: Heinemann-Harvard University Press, 1966–1988.

Proclus

AS *De Arte Sacrificali*. In *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*. Vol. 6. Edited by Joseph Bidez. Bruxelles: Lamartin, 1928.

CCrat. *In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria*. Edited by Georgius Pasquali. Leipzig: Teubner, 1908.
On Plato's Cratylus. Translated by Brian M. Duvick. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007

CEucl. *In primum Euclidis Elementorum librum Commentarii*. Edited by Gottfried Friedlein. Leipzig: Teubner, 1873.
A Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements. Translated by Glenn R. Morrow. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

CParm. *In Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*. Edited by Carlos Steel. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007–2009.
Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon. Edited by Concetta Luna and Alain-Philippe Segonds. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007–
Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon. Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke. Edited by Carlos Steel. 2 vols. Leuven: University of Leuven Press and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982–1985.
Commentary on Plato's Parmenides. Translated by Glenn R. Morrow and John Dillon. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

CRemp *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*. Edited by Wilhelm Kroll. 2 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1899–1901.

CTim. *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*. Edited by Ernst Diehl. 3 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1906.

Commentary on Plato's Timaeus. Translated by Harold Tarrant, Dirk Baltzly, David T. Runia, and Michael Share. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007–

ET *The Elements of Theology. A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*. Edited by Eric R. Dodds. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

Hymn. *Hymni*. Edited by Ernst Vogt. Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1957.
Translated by Robbert M. van den Berg. In *Proclus' Hymns. Essays, Translations, Commentary*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001.

PC(E) *De Philosophia Chaldaica* (*Eclogae*). In *Oracles Chaldaïques*. Edited by Édouard de Places. Pp. 202–217.

PF *De Providentia et Fato*. In *Trois Études sur la Providence*. Vol, II. Edited and Translated by Daniel Isaac. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979.

PT *Theologia Platonis. Théologie platonicienne*. Edited by Henri-Dominique Saffrey and Leendert G. Westerink. 6 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–1996.

Derrida

AF *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

AL *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

AOF *The Archeology of the Frivolous. Reading Condillac*. Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980.

Apoc. "On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy." Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. In *Raising the Tone of Philosophy. Late Essays by Immanuel Kant. Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*. Edited by Peter Fenves. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. Pp. 117–171.

Apor. *Aporias*. Translated by Thomas Dutoit. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Cart. "Cartouches." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 183–254.

CI *Circonfession. Cinquante-neuf périodes et périphrases*. In Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*. Paris: Seuil, 1991. Engl. Trans. Circum.

Circum. *Circumfession. Fifty-Nine Periods and Periphrases*. In Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

CNPP "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations." In *Psychē. Inventions de l'autre*. Paris: Galilée, 1987. Pp. 535–595. Engl. Trans. HTAS

Comp "Composing 'Circumfession.'" In *Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession*. Edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005. Pp. 19–27.

Conf "Confessions and 'Circumfession.' A Roundtable Discussion with Jacques Derrida." In *Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession*. Edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005. Pp. 28–49.

CP *La carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà*. Paris: Flammarion, 1980. Engl. Trans. PC

DI *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Diff. "Différance." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 1–27.

Diss. "Dissemination." In *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 287–366.

Dissém. *La Dissémination*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. Engl. Trans. DI

DM "Donner la mort." In *L'éthique du don. Jacques Derrida et la penseé du don*. Paris: Métailié-Transition, 1992. Engl. Trans. GD

DS "The Double Session." In *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 173–286.

DT *Donner le temps I. La fausse monnaie*. Paris: Galilée, 1991. Engl. Trans. GT.

ED *Écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. Engl. Trans. WD

EHOG *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry. An Introduction*. Translated by John. P. Leavey, Jr. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

EJ "Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 64–78.

Ell. "Ellipsis." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 294–300.

Env. "Envois." In *The Post Card. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 1–256.

EO *The Ear of the Other. Otobiography, Transference, Translation. Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*. Edited by Claude Lévesque and Christie Vance McDonald. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. 2nd Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

EOM "The Ends of Man." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982 Pp. 109–136.

Éper. *Éperons. Les styles de Nietzsche*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978. Engl. Transl. Spurs

Espr. *De l'esprit. Heidegger et la question*. Paris: Galilée, 1987. Engl. Transl. OS

Fors "*Fors*. The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok." Translated by Barbara Johnson. In *The Wolf Man's Magic Word. A Cryptonymy*. By Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Translated by Nicholas Rand. Foreword by Jacques Derrida. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

FRGE "From Restricted to General Economy. A Hegelianism Without Reserve." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 251–277.

FS "Force and Signification." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 3–30.

FSW "Freud and the Scene of Writing." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 196–231.

GD *The Gift of Death*. Translated by David Wills. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Gesch1 "Geschlecht: Sexual Difference and Ontological Difference." Translated by Ruben Bevezdivin. In *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. Pp. 380–402.

Gesch2 "Geschlecht II. Heidegger's Hand." Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. In *Deconstruction and Philosophy. The Texts of Jacques Derrida*. Edited by John Sallis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 161–196.

GL *Glas*. Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. and Richard Rand. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Glas *Glas*. Paris: Galilée, 1974. Repr. Denoël/Gonthier, 1981.

Gramm. *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit, 1967. Engl. Trans. OG

GS "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 154–168.

GT *Given Time I. Counterfeit Money*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

HTAS "How to Avoid Speaking. Denials." Translated by Ken Frieden. In *Derrida and Negative Theology* Edited by Harold Coward and Toby Foshay. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. Pp. 73–142.

KH "Khōra." In *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit Translated by Ian McLoed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 87–127.

Khōra *Khōra*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Engl. Trans. ON, pp. 87–127.

LI *Limited Inc*. Translated by Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Lim. "Limited Inc.: a b c." In *Limited Inc*. Translated by Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman. Evanson: Northwestern University Press, 1988. Pp. 29–110.

LJF "Letter to a Japanese Friend." Translated by David Wood and Andrew Benjamin. In *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*. Edited by Peggy Kamuf. London and New York: Harvester, 1991. Pp. 270–276.

Mall. "Mallarmé." In *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 110–126.

Marges. *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. Engl. Trans. MP

MesC "Mes chances. Au rendez-vous de quelques stéréophonies épicuriennes." In *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 45 (1983): 3–40. Engl. Trans. MyC

MP *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

MyC "My Chances / Mes Chances. A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies." In *Taking Chances. Derrida, Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Edited by Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984. Pp. 1–32.

OG *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri C. Spivak. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

ON *On the Name* Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Translated by David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr. and Ian McLoed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

ORH "On Reading Heidegger." *Research in Phenomenology* 17 (1987): 171–188.

OS *Of Spirit. Heidegger and the Question*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Ousia "Ousia and Grammē. Note on a Note from *Being and Time*." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 29–67.

Outw. "Outwork, prefacing." In *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 1–59.

PA "Passions." In *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Translated by David Wood. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 1–31.

PAP "The Pit and the Pyramid. Introduction to Hegel's Semiology." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 69–108.

Parages *Parages*. Paris: Galilée, 1986.

Parerg. "Parergon." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 15–147.

Pas "Pas." In *Parages*. Paris: Galilée, 1986. Pp. 19–116.

Passions *Passions*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Engl. Trans. ON, pp. 1–31.

PC *The Post Card. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Pharm. "Plato's Pharmacy." In *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 61–171.

PIO "Psyche. Inventions of the Other." Translated by Catherine Porter. In *Reading De Man Reading*. Edited by Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989. Pp. 25–65.

Pos. *Positions*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

PP "Passe-Partout." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 1–13.

PR "The Principle of Reason. The University in the Eyes of its Pupils." Translated by Catherine Porter and Edward P. Morris. *Diacritics* 13 (1983): 3–20.

PS "La parole soufflée." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 169–195.

Psy. *Psychē. Inventions de l'Autre*. Paris: Galilée 1987.

QQ "Qual Quelle. Valéry's Sources." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 297–306.

Rest. "Restitutions of the Truth in Painting." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 255–382.

RM "The Retrait of Metaphor." In *The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances*.

Edited by Julian Wolfreys. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. Pp. 102–129.

RTP *Raising the Tone of Philosophy. Late Essays by Immanuel Kant. Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*. Edited by Peter Fenves. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Sauf *Sauf le nom*. Paris: Galilée, 1993.

SC "The Supplement of Copula. Philosophy before Linguistics." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 175–205.

SEC "Signature, Event, Context." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 307–330.

SICL "This Strange Institution Called Literature: An Interview with Jacques Derrida." In *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 33–75.

Sign. *Signéponge/Signsponge*. Translated by Richard Rand. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

SLN "Sauf le nom (Post-Scriptum)." In *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 33–85.

SOM *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York-London: Routledge, 1994.

SP *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. Translated by David B. Allison. Preface by Newton Garver. Evanston.: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

Spectr. *Spectres de Marx. État de la dette, le travail du deuil, et la nouvelle internationale*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Engl. Trans. SOM

Spurs *Spurs. Nietzsche's Styles*. Translated by Barbara Harlow. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

SSP "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 278–293

TDB "Des Tours de Babel." Translated by Joseph F. Graham. In *Difference in Translation*. Edited with an Introduction by Joseph F. Graham. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. Pp. 165–207.

Telep. "Telepathy." Translated by Nicholas Royle. *Oxford Literary Review* 10 (1988): 3–41.

Title "Title (to be specified)." Translated by Tom Conley. *Sub-stance* 31 (1981): 5–22.

Tours "Des Tours de Babel." In *Difference in Translation*. Edited with and Introduction by Joseph F. Graham. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. Pp. 209–248. Engl. Trans. TDB

TP *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago: University of Chicago of Press, 1987.

TSOF "To Speculate—On 'Freud.'" In *The Postcard. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 257–409.

Tymp. "Tympan." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. ix–xxix.
VM "Violence and Metaphysics. An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel. Lévinas" In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 79–153.
Voix *La voix et le phénomène*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. Engl. Trans. SP
VP *La Vérité en Peinture*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978. Engl. Trans. TP
WD *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
WM "White Mythology. Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 207–271.
WT *Word Traces. Readings of Paul Celan*. Edited by Aris Fioretos. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Heidegger

Aleth. "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)." In *Early Greek Thinking*. Translated by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row 1975. Pp. 102–123.
AS "Anaximander's Saying." Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. In *Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. 242–281.
BDT "Building. Dwelling. Thinking." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. Pp. 145–161.
Bes. *Besinnung*. GA 66. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1997. Engl. Transl. Mindf.
BP *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (*Vom Ereignis*). GA 65. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994. Engl. Transl. CP
BPP *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982.
BT *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.
BWD "Bauen. Wohnen. Denken." In *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1954. Engl. Trans. BDT
CP *Contributions to Philosophy* (*From Enowning*). Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.
EG "On the Essence of Ground." Translated by William McNeill. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 97–135.
EGT *Early Greek Thinking*. Translated by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.
*EHD *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*. GA 4. Frankfurt: Klostermann. 6. Auflage 1996. Engl. Transl. EHP.

EHP *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Translated by Keith Hoeller. Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000.

EM *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. GA 40. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983. Engl. Trans, IM

EOP *The End of Philosophy*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

ET *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*. Translated by Ted Sadler. London and New York: Continuum, 2002.

FS *Frühe Schriften*. GA 1. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978.

GP *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*. GA 24. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989. Engl. Transl. BPP.

HBE "Hegels Begriff der Erfahrung." In *Holzwege*. Pp. 105–192. Engl. Trans. HCE.

HCE "Hegel's Concept of Experience." In *Off the Beaten Track*. Pp. 86–156.

Holzw. *Holzwege*. GA 5. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977. Engl. Trans. OBT

ID *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

IM *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

IWM "Introduction to 'What is Metaphysics?'." Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 277–290.

Lang. "Language." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. Pp. 187–210.

LH "Letter on Humanism." Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 239–276.

MAL *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*. GA 26, 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann 1990. Engl. Trans. MFL

MFL *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Translated by Michael Heim. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Mindf. *Mindfulness*. Translated by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary. New York: Continuum, 2006.

NI *Nietzsche*. Vol. 4: *Nihilism*. Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi. Edited with Notes and an Analysis by David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.

Nietz. *Nietzsche*. 2 volumes. Pfullingen: Neske, 1961.

OBT *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

OCM "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics." In *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. Pp. 42–74.

OWA "The Origin of the Work of Art." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. Pp. 17–87.

OWL *On the Way to Language*. Translated by Peter D. Hertz and Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

Pathm. *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

PI "The Principle of Identity." In *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. Pp. 23–41.
PIA *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung*. GA 61. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994.
PLT *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
PR *The Principle of Reason*. Translated by Reginald Lilly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.
PRL *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*. GA 60. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995.
QB "On the Question of Being." Translated by William McNeill. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 291–322.
QCT *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt. New York: Garland, 1977.
SD *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Tübingen: Niemayer, 1976.
SG *Der Satz vom Grund*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1957. Engl. Trans. PR
SZ *Sein und Zeit*. GA 2. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977. Engl. Trans. BT
TB *On Time and Being*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
TK *Die Technik und die Kehre*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1962. Engl. Trans. QCT
*UKW "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes." In *Holzwege*. Pp. 7–68.
US *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1959. Engl. Trans. OWL
VA *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. 4. Auflage. Pfullingen: Neske, 1978.
VWW *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*. GA 34. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1997. Engl. Trans. ET
WCT *What is Called Thinking*. Translated by J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
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